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Design



Street furniture p.15

HENRION

The Council of Industrial Design September 1954 No. 69 Price 2s

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PERIODICALS



Pressure Product

IN 1939 I.C.I. began the works-scale production of a new plastic that was to play a major role in defeating Hitler's air armada. The plastic was polythene, the white, tough, flexible material that provided the high-frequency insulation in almost every wartime radar set. Without polythene, the Allied land and sea radar systems could not have developed as they did—let alone airborne radar. No other material could supply the combination of insulating and mechanical properties that airborne radar needed. Polythene's discovery in 1933 was the result of research on the effect of extreme pressure on chemical reactions. It was pure research, inasmuch as it was aimed primarily at the acquisition of scientific knowledge. But it yielded polythene.

Making polythene in large quantities was a difficult

task. Ethylene gas had to be heated at pressures similar to those produced in a 15-inch naval gun. Such pressures were greater than had ever been used in chemical plant before. The first experimental safety-valve blew the skylights out of the laboratory, while a gauge- or pipe-burst was not uncommon. But by September, 1939, the Research Team handed the world's first polythene plant over to the works in time to meet the wartime needs of radar. Today, this unusual plastic is doing its unique job as a high-frequency insulator in many branches of the growing electronics industries—in radio and television; in radar and electronic control equipment; and in undersea cables—but it has also been found ideal for many other uses, from cold-water tubing to packaging film—of which hundreds of miles are produced each week.

Imperial Chemical Industries Limited



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SEPTEMBER 1954

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Design

Street furniture

"Architecture, together with the design of street name-plates and street furnishings of all kinds, are in a sense art made compulsory: anybody can dodge a book or a piece of music, but buildings and lamp-posts he must see."

THE QUOTATION IS FROM an editorial note in THE OBSERVER, written two or three years ago but no less topical today. The design and siting of street furniture have for many years been matters for complaint among architects, designers and groups of independent watch-dogs intent on preserving the amenities of our cities, towns and villages. John Betjeman has perhaps been the most articulate and biting critic of the monstrous lamp-posts that have marred so many of our country towns and villages: his fans will recall his 'sick serpents' and 'giant match strikes' and his appeal in THE DAILY TELEGRAPH: "England's beauty is in its variety and it is ours to protect. Each place is a different problem."

This public and private concern did not pass unnoticed. Action followed which, in the course of time, will show good results in preventing further damage; a few local authorities may even see a way to undoing the harm already done.

This issue of DESIGN reviews the task of the Street Furniture Committee set up by the Council of Industrial Design at the request of the Ministry of Transport, a typically democratic instrument for solving a national problem, steering clear of sanctions, controls, centralisation and standardisation, but offering incentives to those authorities who aim to do better next time and commercial rewards to those manufacturers who improve their designs.

The most heartening feature of the committee's work has been the active collaboration of manufacturers of lamp-posts or lighting-columns. Once the shortcomings of their earlier productions were pointed out they willingly took advice, in many cases employed consultant designers and architects, and in a short space of time have produced a range of some 300 acceptable models which the Street Furniture Committee has approved. In the near future, only such designs as have been accepted for the Approved List will be eligible for the Ministry of Transport contribution towards trunk-road lighting. At the same time the Royal Fine Art Commissions, although relinquishing their responsibility for maintaining a list of passable designs, will always be at the service of local authorities to advise on the selection of the best designs for particular sites. This is a most difficult task as economy in lighting calls for fewer and higher lamp-posts which, however well designed, are out of scale with the smaller streets. Many fine trees, too, have been sacrificed because they obscured the higher lamps.

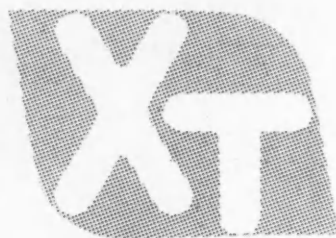
A good start has been made with lamp-posts but there is more to street furniture than street lighting. There will be no call for congratulations until local and national authorities also tackle the design problems posed by road signs, name-plates, litter bins, bollards, kiosks and all the multifarious paraphernalia of the urban and rural scene.

POINTS and POINTERS

CONVINCING SETTINGS

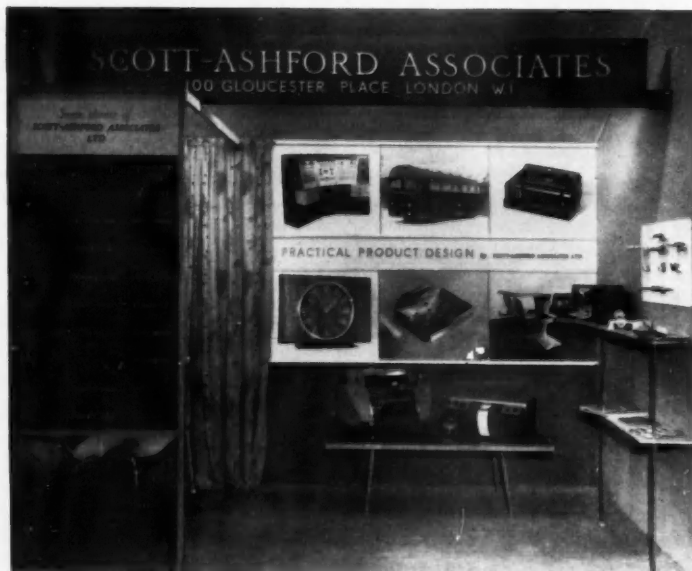
Keen cinema-goers will appreciate signs of what appears to be a renewed search for authenticity in the settings of some British films about life today. For long we have seen and tired of the particular brand of 'B' film genre in which the ubiquitous slinky 'moll' moves through an environment of extravagant plush, or middle-class ladies drink tea among reproduction luxury – environments which recur as symbols of the unobtainable richness of stardom – perennial carrots before the donkey's nose. How much public taste is moulded by these displays of spurious glamour is anybody's guess, but the fact remains

that a story about intelligent people told against a background of the furniture and furnishings that intelligent people might buy, comes as a refreshing breeze across the silver screen – whatever its shape. Many will remember the charming mews flat in 'Genevieve' – convincing and certainly not unusual these days – while readers of DESIGN may recall the article on 'Contemporary British film sets' (November 1952) which noticed some of the first experiments in this field. Soon we shall be seeing a new film from British Lion, 'The Teckman Mystery', set in a London flat with furnishings loaned by Heal & Son Ltd. William Kellner, the designer of this pleasant room and art director of the film, consulted the CoID 'Design Review' before approaching Heal's. Though modern furniture and coverings predominate there is a sprinkling of traditional designs as well – for who, after all, can afford nowadays to refurnish a room completely in a single style?



The 'Triennale', to be visited in Milan from now until November 15, is the occasion for summing-up international design trends. Sixteen countries outside the Iron Curtain, including Great Britain, are there with their latest and best to compare with the native Italian genius – so often first in the realm of ideas and second in the mass-production of them. To relieve the strain of being so triumphantly up-to-date, there is a display of architectural gardening which includes traditional flowers.

As the herald of new Italian thoughts on design comes STILE INDUSTRIA, the second design magazine to join our ranks this year. It deals with industrial design and graphic art and promises to shape as well as the American newcomer INDUSTRIAL DESIGN. We say this not only on the basis of the first number, which tells us in colour quite a lot we did not know already, but because STILE INDUSTRIA is a Domus publication. The new magazine is quarterly and costs L900 from the publishers.



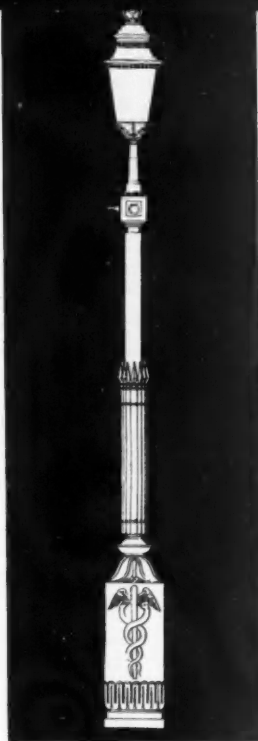
Visitors to 'The Production Exhibition' in July were surprised to find a firm of consultant designers represented. As far as we know Scott-Ashford Associates Ltd is the first team of consultant product designers to take space in a British exhibition. Their presence among the big prestige displays of industrial companies made many realise that design is a part of production and that there are such people as industrial designers. The response was beyond expectations: out of roughly 100 visitors a day, between six and eight came up with definite design problems that needed solving.

CoID RE-SITED 'Exhibition building and offices for the CoID' form the subject of this year's RIBA Victory Scholarship Competition. The proposed site is at the top of the Duke of York's steps on the east side of Waterloo Place, and out of 166 entrants, 12 competitors have been selected to prepare final drawings. Included in each scheme must be a total of 9,000 sq ft of floor area for exhibitions, as well as office space. Now coinciding with the news of the Council's 'Design Centre' this competition is timely. We hope to see the results soon after Christmas.



STREET furniture

George Williams*



SIR HERBERT MANZONI, City Engineer and Surveyor, City of Birmingham, writes: "In recent years the elements which go to make up a street scene have multiplied greatly; traffic requirements alone have introduced a problem very difficult to solve. These factors give a great opportunity to local authorities who, by enlightened control, can influence our environment for the better. Good design in the street requires the achievement of harmony between all its elements. Unfortunately, the requirement of many modern features, particularly traffic signs, is that they shall stand out and 'screech their message' to the beholder."

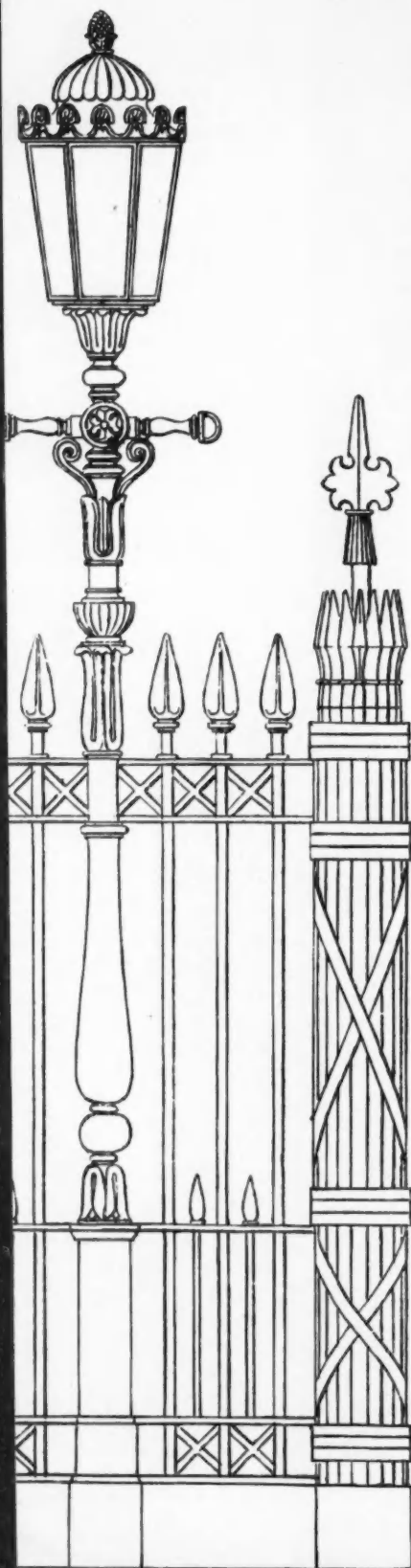
The Council of Industrial Design is now applying itself to street furniture, beginning with the design of lamp-columns and proceeding to many other items. The article which follows by George Williams is worth close study as it directs our attention to the improvements which can be made.

LEFT Street lighting-column in concrete and tubular metal (CoID Approved List). Designed by Jack Howe for the B T-H Co Ltd. Manufactured by Spun Concrete Ltd.

VISIT PRACTICALLY ANY CITY, town or village in the British Isles and you will find evidence of the bad design and careless siting of street furniture. Look at the main street in some of the larger cities and you will find an appalling muddle of objects. This



* Secretary, CoID Street Furniture Committee.



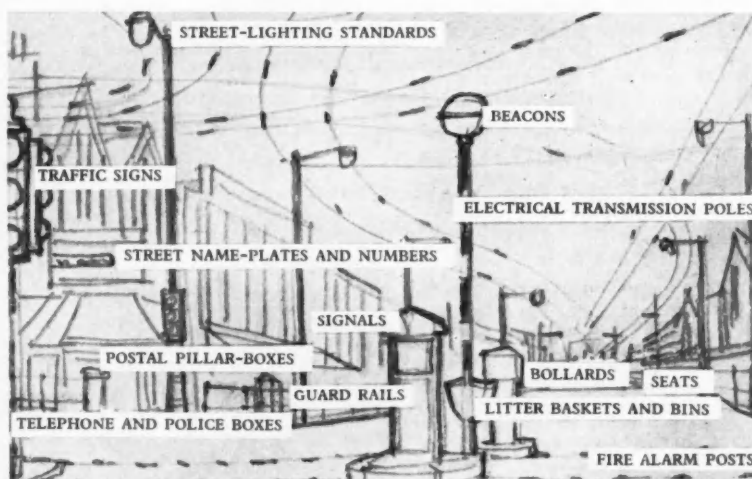
haphazard sprouting has even outpaced the rapid growth of road transport and other forms of communication, leaving a surfeit in conflicting shapes, sizes, styles and colours. Much of it defeats the primary object and leads to the confusion of road users and pedestrians alike.

The amount of street furniture increased steadily through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries leaving a legacy of chaos, despite the individual excellence of many items and the care taken in earlier times to ensure a rightness in relation to landscape. But with this century came the need for more and more street furniture, more telephone kiosks, traffic signs and directions, more pedestrian refuges, shelters, bollards and street lighting, and because there was little individual or collective care taken by the organisations responsible, they were often placed at the most convenient point in the street without regard to what was already there.

In this situation the good design of much street furniture becomes a matter, not of aesthetics alone, but of sheer *preservation*. Traffic signs, for example, must allow no reasonable margin for error, give no ground for the uncertainty which in modern conditions is the cause of so many accidents. For accident prevention alone a drastic review of the present state of affairs is long overdue, but to architects, designers and groups of independent persons intent on preserving the amenities of our cities, towns and villages the design and siting of street furniture have, for many years, been matters of complaint.

Multiplicity of objects

Street furniture may in the normal course be ordered and erected by a number of different authorities, both local and national. The list of items indicated in the sketch below is by no means exhaustive, but will serve to show the complexity of types and to indicate the authorities responsible:



Complicated as the problems of design and siting are, they are often made more difficult where public money has to be spent. The initiative must rest with the purchasing authority, for a manufacturer naturally will claim that there cannot be much wrong with his goods so long as his customers go on buying them. At present even what is essentially a single item is often made by two different manufacturers with little contact between them. This has often resulted

in incongruity between many lamp-standards and the lanterns they support.

The London Transport Executive quickly realised the importance of harmony in the street when it commenced its work in 1933. The co-ordination of many different items coming for the first time under one control was no easy task, but a sound design policy, successfully applied, has resulted in one satisfactory solution to a very general design problem. This has been achieved by ensuring that every item, whatever its purpose, is well-designed down to the smallest detail, yet shares a common style with the other equipment. The results of this work stand as an example to all.

Since street furniture is essentially a part of the 'civic design' problem of architecture and landscape for which the city or county architect is responsible, then its design and selection should perhaps come under his control, although in the matter of street lighting and other items requiring supply services collaboration with the appropriate authority is obviously essential. Many of those responsible are not now making the same kinds of snap decision that have only too often in the past been taken by some insensitive committee, with the result that we are forced to look at bad designs every day of our lives. A great deal of thought is being given to selection and siting and to the effect of each item or group of items on the architectural scene, particularly in the new towns.

In the new towns

Where the architect or engineer has no control over the design of standard equipment such as telephone kiosks, posting-boxes and electrical switch-gear, the authority concerned frequently collaborates to find a suitable site. One new town corporation has been permitted to influence to some extent the design and siting of electric sub-stations, and in the case of gas governor kiosks both colour scheme and siting have been agreed with the regional gas board.

The Crawley Development Corporation has spared no effort in the study of the problem, influencing the design of manufacturers' products and preparing special designs where suitable items were not available. Lighting-columns, neighbourhood plans mounted on notice boards at the entrance of each area, street name-plates of pressed aluminium, all show close attention to detail. Harlow used a special alphabet for street names designed within Ministry of Transport recommendations, and for Hatfield a stamped aluminium plate is attached to a concrete standard of good shape. It is mounted just inside the pavement at head-lamp level, except for the town centre. At Hatfield also, a well-designed Class B concrete lighting-column has been introduced.

The stock-in-trade

But the greatest difficulty besetting the architect is the shortage of good *available* street furniture. An examination of manufacturers' current ranges has in the past led to the discovery of very few items that are not out of place in the intimate street scene, both in old towns and modern housing estates. The need for lamp-posts, seats, litter bins, and shelters that will blend with, and not dominate, the street scene in the new towns has become so acute that the architect is often forced to adopt the uneconomic solution of preparing special designs. It is understandable that the manufacturer is unable to satisfy the demand of each development corporation except at a high cost to the buyer. He must see a return for the very considerable outlay on moulds and jigs for any new design and must spread it over the largest possible production in order to market his



products at a competitive price. These difficulties point once again to the need for a sound design policy in industry and a proper relationship between the producer and consumer.

The work of the CoID

The Council of Industrial Design is pledged to promote this relationship by its terms of reference. Its work in selecting the industrial exhibits for the Festival of Britain provided an opportunity for discussions on matters of design with manufacturers and led to the selection of street furniture for the South Bank and Lansbury.

At about the same time it was realised that the Council, after seven years' experience in dealing with manufacturers' design problems, was in a good position to continue the work of the Royal Fine Art Commissions for England and Scotland which, in order to improve the daytime appearance of street lighting, assumed, immediately after the war, the responsibility of examining the designs of lighting-columns on behalf of the Ministry of Transport. Under this arrangement the Ministry would not contribute towards the cost of a local authority's lighting installations on trunk roads, unless the designs had first been passed by the Commissions.

Towards the end of 1951, therefore, it was agreed that although the Commissions should continue to be responsible for advising public and *quasi*-public bodies on the selection of street-lighting equipment for particular places or areas where questions of public amenity or artistic importance were involved, the Council of Industrial Design should take over the responsibility of advising manufacturers on the design of their standard products, and maintain a record of approved designs.

The Street Furniture Committee

Consequently, in January 1952 the Council set up its Street Furniture Committee to examine designs submitted by manufacturers.* Negotiations with them

* MEMBERS OF COUNCIL OF INDUSTRIAL DESIGN STREET FURNITURE COMMITTEE :

W. J. WORBOYS, *Chairman, CoID, Director ICI Ltd (CHAIRMAN)*
G. GRIME, *Member, The Road Research Laboratory*
SIR HERBERT MANZONI, *City Engineer and Surveyor, City of Birmingham*
J. M. RICHARDS, *Editor, THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW*
F. R. S. YORKE, *Architect*
GORDON RUSSELL, *Director, CoID*
ALISTER MAYNARD, *Chief Officer Scottish Committee, CoID*
J. M. BENOY, *Acting Chief Industrial Officer, CoID*
GEORGE WILLIAMS, *Industrial Officer, CoID (SECRETARY)*

through the Association of Public Lighting Engineers, involving discussion at the design stages and in some cases the recommendation of consultant architects and designers, have resulted in a marked improvement in the general standard of design of lighting-columns and brackets in concrete and steel for class A and class B roads. Other materials are under consideration by manufacturers and development associations. There are at the present time some 300 new designs recorded on the Council's Approved List in which the class A column ranks for the Ministry of Transport contribution towards the cost of installation. But, to avoid hardship to those manufacturers who have considerable orders outstanding and to lessen the difficulties involved in the making of new moulds, the designs originally passed by the Royal Fine Art Commissions are also acceptable to the Ministry for the time being. Many of these designs will be withdrawn during the next few years.

The fullest credit is due to the column manufacturers who, faced with the production difficulties and expense of preparing new manufacturing equipment for designs which were acceptable to the Council, wasted no time in getting down to the job. The results of their work have come quickly. No effort has been spared by the manufacturers in overcoming the problems of appearance and practicability, and this has resulted in a wide range of slim, unobtrusive columns devoid of unnecessary ornament. If manufacturers and users of other street equipment follow this lead we shall make steady progress towards the general improvement which is so vital to the appearance of our streets.

The daytime appearance of street lighting must obviously take second place to the need for efficient lighting, although we could certainly improve the appearance of our streets if it were possible to achieve the ideals of Thiville, who wrote, "The utmost degree of perfection would be attained if the whole pavement and street could be illuminated without our perceiving from whence the light proceeds".*

But the lantern must be suspended by some means and at the regulation heights and spacing laid down by the Minister of Transport's departmental committee on street lighting. The lamp-column can be a most important element in civic design, and has been the subject of emphatic and decorative treatment. But in the past certain materials have been used wrongly, and decoration introduced to produce an

* Count Joseph Gascon Jean Baptiste Thiville, a French engineer, wrote an essay in 1800 'On the means hitherto employed for lighting streets, interiors of houses, etc, and new means of accomplishing this'. In the same year he took out a patent for a new type of lamp.

'architectural' style, but with little thought for its ultimate appearance *in situ*.

The trend towards simplicity in design which the Council has encouraged perhaps develops a sense of standardisation in the designs of a number of manufacturers, leaving little margin for imagination or craftsmanship. However, the very conditions imposed by suspending a lantern at a given height, and at a given distance from the vertical centre-line of the column, in themselves preclude an 'adventurous' approach. At least as a first step we are better off with a simple pole than one whose bulky decoration may quickly become dated. Texture and colour are of equal importance to shape, and manufacturers are looking towards these aspects of design, and also towards the possibilities of subdued decoration which is complementary to the material used, as a relief from an appearance of sameness while attempting to re-develop individual characteristics in their products.

The manufacturers of lanterns are already attending more to the daytime appearance of their products. There is already evidence of closer co-operation with the column manufacturer in an effort to co-ordinate

Three illustrations of Hackney High Street showing the gradual intrusion of street furniture during the last 100 years. Today, traffic signals, 'Keep Left' bollards, lighting-standards, guard rails, overhead wires with their supporting columns and countless signboards combine to produce a hopelessly muddled and unco-ordinated effect.



1850

1910



1954



the two items. Only the third member of the team – the manufacturer of the control gear – is lagging behind. The scaling down in size of chokes, switch-gear and condensers, as practised in the United States, has hardly been tackled. The size of this gear and the area required for service connections have in the past very largely governed the girth of the column at the base, where cavities are provided for them, and only the ingenuity of the column maker has resulted in the slim dimensions of the new designs. There is, of course, a limit to the slimness of a concrete column dictated by the need to withstand impact shocks, but more careful attention to the design and size of the control gear may result in yet further improvement.

Seats out of doors

The Council's interest in street furniture is by no means confined to street lighting: it hopes to extend its influence to other equipment when opportunities occur. Two such opportunities to stimulate an improvement in the design of outdoor furniture have been taken in 1953 and 1954. The first was to organise, in collaboration with the Corporation of Birmingham, a manufacturers' competition for outdoor seats (*DESIGN* June 1953 pages 30-2). Entries, which had to conform to one or more of the six main categories and be presented in full-scale prototype or mock-up form, were displayed in an open-air exhibition in the Whitehall section of the Embankment Gardens during May 1953. A panel of judges nominated by the Council and the Birmingham Corporation found that generally the competition had produced some excellent designs and its remarks on each design were used quite extensively by manufacturers to effect still greater improvement in the design of their products. The manufacturers found this successful exhibition well worthwhile and a number of them received considerable orders for the seats displayed.

The second opportunity was to exhibit outdoor seats and tables on a site in the Royal Horticultural Society's Chelsea Show in June of this year. The entries were selected from 'Design Review' and included some which had been entered for the 'Outdoor Seats Competition' and also other designs which had been developed as a result of the competition. This display met with considerable success and helped to place before the general public and local authorities the new and better designs which are quickly being produced.

Whatever the approach to improving street furniture and its siting – and with the ever-increasing growth of traffic some attempt at co-ordination can scarcely be left much longer – the final responsibility rests with public authorities. From what has been said here it will be seen that manufacturers are beginning to co-operate towards the improvement, but the day when every good item is available to order is probably well distant. It will come nearer as the appreciation of good design spreads throughout the industries concerned, and as the demand for it increases.



LONDON TRANSPORT

THE LONDON TRANSPORT EXECUTIVE'S co-ordination of many different items was not an easy task, but a sound design policy has resulted in one satisfactory solution to a very general design problem. Every item, whatever its purpose, is well designed yet shares a common style with the other equipment.

LEFT A combined shelter and mast sign at Enfield West Station, designed by Adams, Holden & Pearson for London Transport.

BELOW This concrete bus shelter is well in keeping with the present-day trend for clean, unobtrusive street furniture and will appeal to many local authorities. It is now under consideration for use as standard equipment by London Transport. Designed by Jack Howe for Spun Concrete Ltd.



LEFT Although temporary, the L T E portable bus stop retains the family likeness expected by millions of Londoners.

RIGHT The incorporation of the time-table holder and prototype litter bin in the design of this familiar London Transport standard shows how successfully more than one service can be combined in a single unit. Litter bin designed by Jack Howe.

NEW TOWNS

IN THE NEW TOWNS a great deal of thought has been given to the selection and siting of street furniture, and to the effect of each item or group of items on the architectural scene. The need for equipment that will blend with, and not dominate, the street has become so acute that the architect is often forced to prepare special designs.

LEFT This concrete column incorporates a special mushroom lantern, and control gear placed forward of the main vertical centre line, which results in the very slim proportions of the column itself. Designed by Kenneth Boyd in collaboration with the architects of Hatfield New Town and made by Anglian Building Products Ltd.

BELOW 1 A concrete traffic bollard at the ends of walk-ways in Harlow.

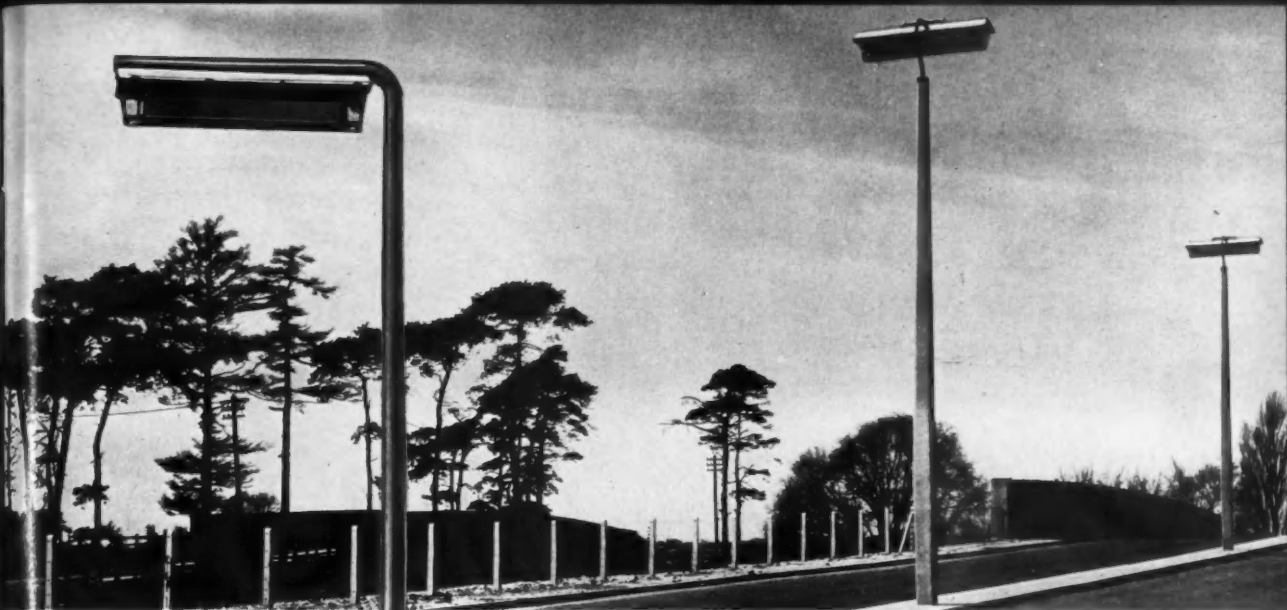
ABOVE Concrete column and lantern. Column designed by Concrete

RIGHT A 2 concrete at Ironworks

BELOW 2 at Cratley

BELOW 3 for use in metal, it has wire-mesh

BELOW 4 boards used



ABOVE Concrete columns in use at Stevenage. They are fitted with a special steel bracket and lantern made by the B T-H Co Ltd. Column designed by A. M. Rankin and made by Concrete Utilities Ltd.

RIGHT A 25 ft main-road column in prestressed concrete at Crawley. Manufacturers: Stanton Ironworks Ltd.

BELOW 2 One of the new street-name boards at Crawley.

BELOW 3 This new litter bin has been designed for use in Harlow New Town. Constructed of metal, it has a hinged front panel to enable the wire-mesh basket to be removed.

BELOW 4 An example of the house-number boards used in Harlow housing areas.



ABOVE The design of this 15-ft Class B 'Broadcrete' column was influenced by the needs of Crawley New Town. Designed by A. M. Rankin for Concrete Utilities Ltd.



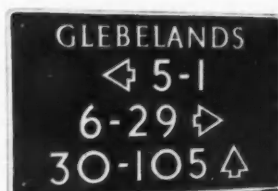
ABOVE This tubular steel lamp-post with its 'mushroom' type lantern is used in the Stow in Harlow. The control gear, normally housed in the column, is underground.



2



3



4



THE DAYTIME APPEARANCE of street-lighting equipment must obviously take second place to the need for efficient illumination, but the examples shown here, which are all on the CoID Approved List, show how carefully manufacturers have tackled the many problems associated with column design. Their elegance does great credit to the designers in overcoming the structural problems involved.

1 Class A 25-ft prestressed concrete column, by Stanton Ironworks Co Ltd. 2 Class B 15-ft tubular steel column with special lantern, designed by David Mellor for the North Midlands Engineering Co Ltd. 3 An elegant design in galvanised tubular sheet steel by Poles Ltd. 4 25-ft Class A

prestressed
strength. T
tubular steel
Ltd. 6 2
metal brack
Quarry Co



5

6

prestressed column with added reinforcement at the base for strength. The General Electric Co Ltd. 5 Class A 25-ft tubular steel column with double arms, by Stewarts & Lloyds Ltd. 6 25-ft Class A prestressed concrete column with metal brackets, designed by Basil Spence for Springbank Quarry Co Ltd.



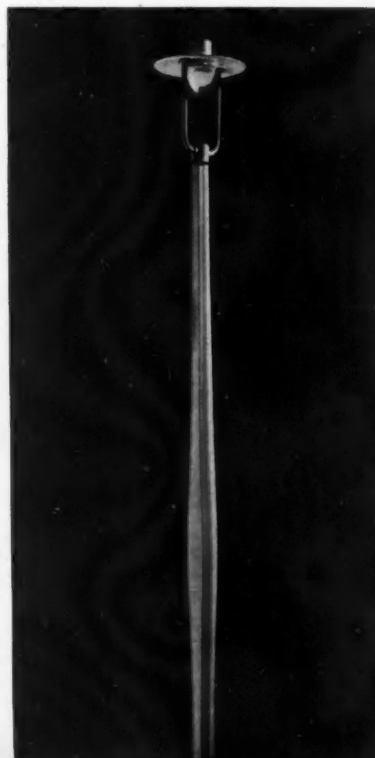
A design for a timber column mounted on a reinforced concrete plinth. The Timber Development Association.

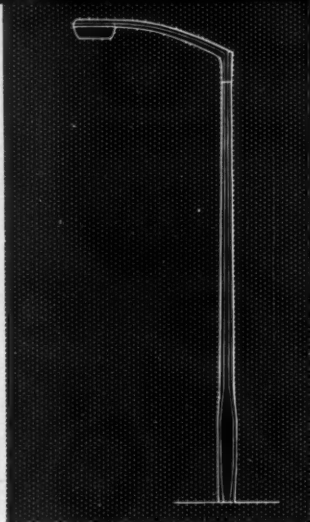
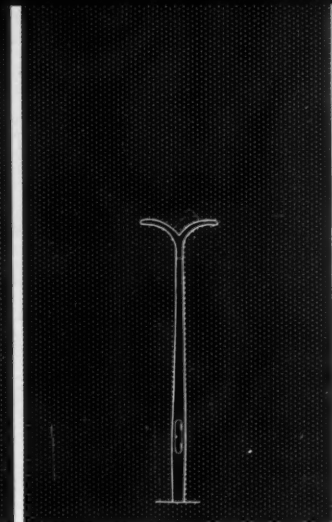
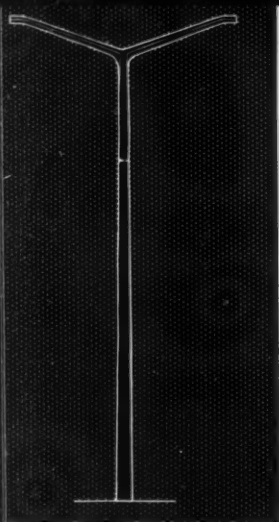
A design for a cast-iron 15-ft column with special lantern and bracket, designed by David Mellor for the North Midlands Engineering Co Ltd.



25-ft Class A tubular steel column with single-arm bracket. Stewarts & Lloyds Ltd.

15-ft Class B concrete column with 'post-top' lantern. The General Electric Co Ltd.





THE ILLUSTRATIONS ABOVE show a further selection from over 300 designs on the CoID Approved List. The care taken by their designers has shown good results and a very great improvement on earlier versions.

1 A 25-ft Class A reinforced concrete column with twin arm brackets by Revo Electric Co Ltd. 2 A 15-ft Class B 'Broadcrete' Type E reinforced or prestressed concrete column designed by A. M. Rankin for Concrete Utilities Ltd. 3 A 25-ft Class A 'Highway' reinforced or prestressed concrete column, by Concrete Utilities Ltd. 4 A 25-ft Class A sectional tubular steel column with 'shepherd's crook' bracket, by Poles Ltd.

BELOW Many columns with this type of head were being manufactured recently. Their ugliness and unsuitability for the modern street speak for themselves.

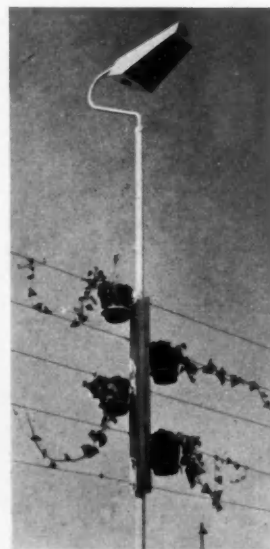


BELOW Civic pride adrift. The lamps, the most important part of the column, take second place to the decoration.



ABOVE These three designs by Metal Developments Limited, Birmingham, for 15-ft Class B lighting-columns are shown in prototype form. They are constructed of tapered aluminium alloy tubing. There are a number of advantages in using aluminium for lighting-columns, not the least of which is lightness, which considerably lessens installation work.

BELOW The problems involved in decorative exterior lighting cannot be compared with those of street lighting, yet examples such as this design by Design Research Unit could be modified to meet more exacting conditions. (Not suitable for inclusion on the CoID Approved List.)



CASE HISTORY

IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT to find four illustrations which show more clearly the progress which has been made in column design. 4 is the latest design by this Company and is on the CoID Approved List. Its slim and graceful proportions are helped by the introduction of a special lantern which shares a fine continuity of line with the curved bracket. Made by Concrete Utilities Ltd.

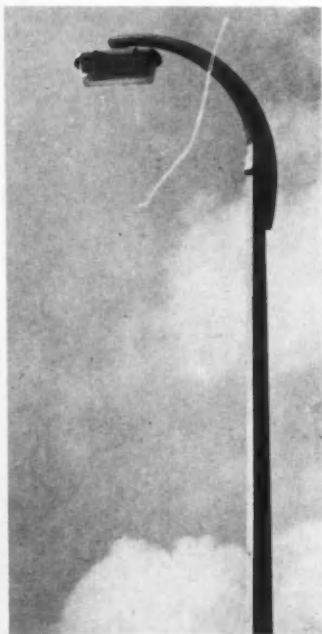
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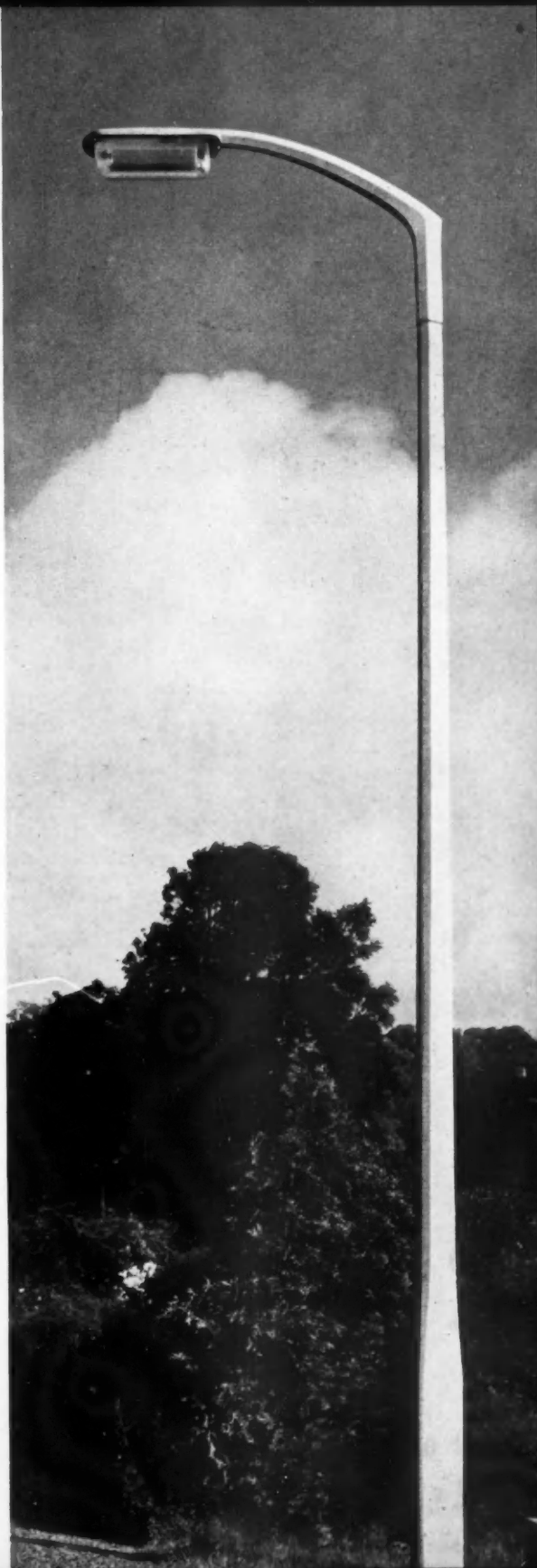


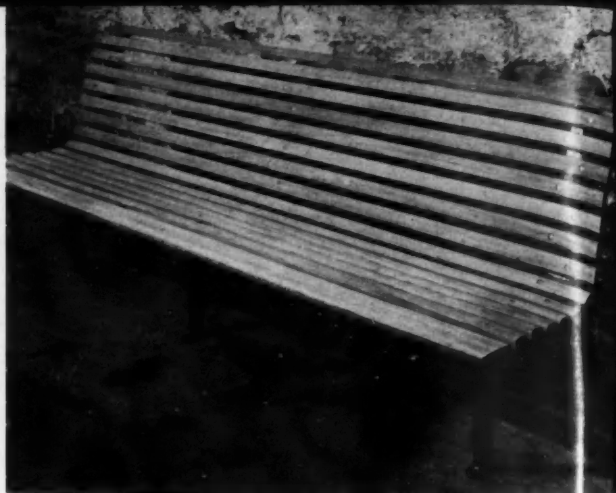
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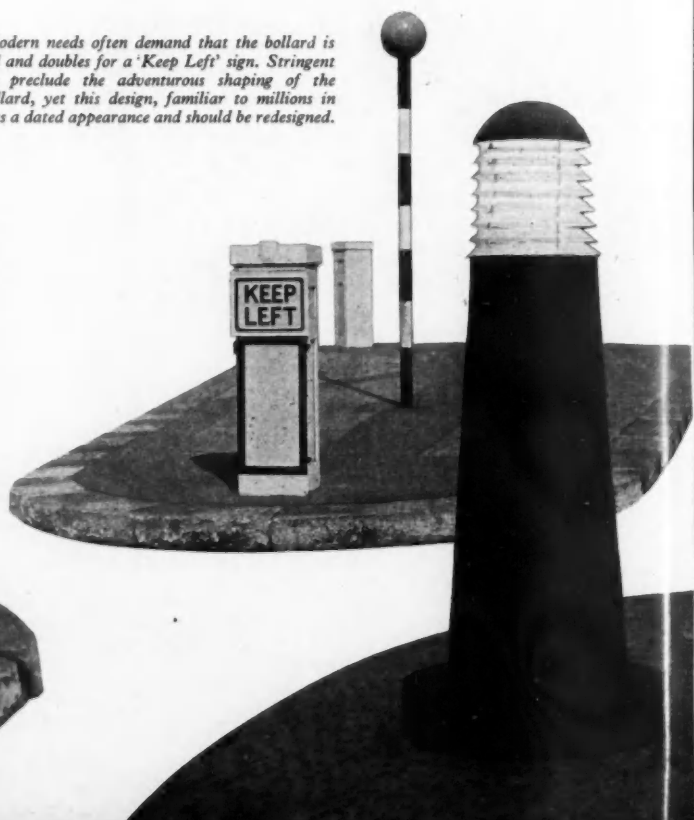
MISCELLANEOUS EQUIPMENT

THE COID, IN COLLABORATION with the City of Birmingham, organised in 1953 a competition for outdoor seats. 1 and 2 are of seats which were awarded First-Class Diplomas; 3 is an example of a seat exhibited in the special exhibition of outdoor furniture at the 1954 Chelsea Flower Show.

LEFT This illuminated post from Denmark, by exploiting the traditional bollard form, regains something that the Cubist version, typical of many British 'islands', has lost.

BELOW RIGHT The louvred light cover, fitting naturally into the bollard shape, offers a striking contrast to the lighthouse beacon attachments sometimes used to bring an obsolete post into line with modern requirements. This was specially designed for the Festival of Britain.

BELOW Modern needs often demand that the bollard is illuminated and doubles for a 'Keep Left' sign. Stringent regulations preclude the adventurous shaping of the Danish bollard, yet this design, familiar to millions in Britain, has a dated appearance and should be redesigned.





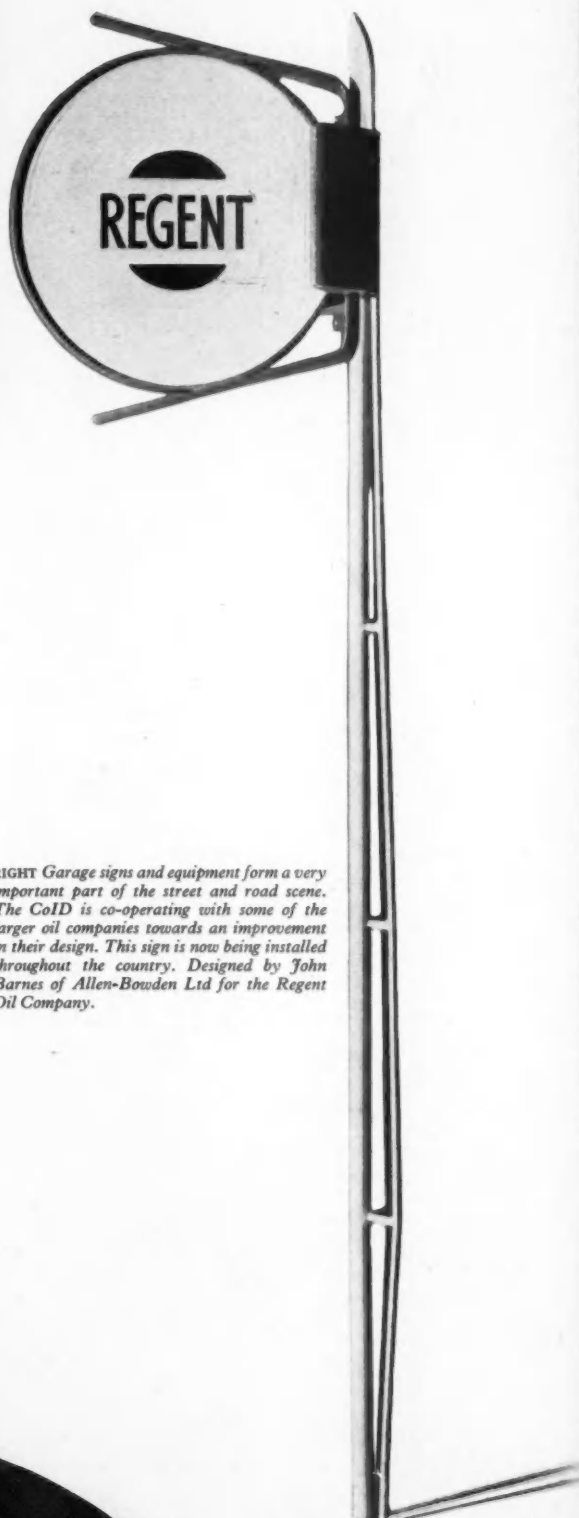
ABOVE 1 Full-width park seat of aluminium alloy side frames with Malayan hardwood seat slats and arm-rests, by Metal Developments Ltd. 2 This seat frame is of stove-enamelled cast iron, with slats of afrormosia, by L M Furniture Ltd. 3 Another cast-iron park bench with teak slats, designed by Adrian Heath for Hardy & Padmore Ltd.

BELOW LEFT This bollard design, for the Cement & Concrete Manufacturers' Association Research Station, in mottled concrete of black and white is in two separate sections. It was designed so that if hit by a vehicle the upper section would topple from its plinth without shattering.

BELOW RIGHT This concrete drinking-fountain from the Festival of Britain incorporates a platform for children which is part of the fountain itself.



RIGHT Garage signs and equipment form a very important part of the street and road scene. The CoID is co-operating with some of the larger oil companies towards an improvement in their design. This sign is now being installed throughout the country. Designed by John Barnes of Allen-Bowden Ltd for the Regent Oil Company.





MISCELLANEOUS EQUIPMENT *continued*



ABOVE An army of bicycles propped against the kerb is an untidy menace to other road users. These two arrangements solve the problem neatly. The circular stand from Copenhagen saves space since it accommodates about 50 machines.

BELOW The familiar and efficient British pattern of inset paving blocks with recesses for the cycle wheels. Made by Stelcon (Industrial Floors) Ltd.



ABOVE LEFT The authority responsible for this bus shelter realised that street furniture should be in keeping with its background. But faced with an unspoilt village green it chose a rustic façade, with the result that the shelter looks like a dilapidated beach hut.

ABOVE RIGHT In contrast with the pastiche 'log cabin', this very good design in timber shows a sensible use of materials, resulting in a design which is eminently suitable for rural and urban areas. The London Transport Executive has it under consideration for future use. Designed by Jack Howe.

RIGHT 1 Unlike the standard GPO telephone kiosk, which is designed as a single unit, this design by Neville Conder for the Government of Eire can also be erected in series. Placing the telephone at right angles to the door allows maximum light to the instrument.

2 Logical arrangement of telephone equipment on a central column leaves plenty of room in this Dutch kiosk. Elimination of unnecessary vertical glazing bars contributes to the neat, uncluttered appearance.

3 Although a good design of its day, this GPO kiosk reflects the architecture of yet an earlier period. It is, by modern standards, a little pompous, and should be re-considered. Designed by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott in 1936.

1 Perhaps a little too festive for widespread use, but eminently suitable for its job in the Festival of Britain. An inner paper container facilitates litter collection. Designed by Jack Howe.

2 The perforations of this Danish box are a decorative alternative to plain sheet metal, but do not allow the refuse to drop out.

3 A striped drum and saucer top combine to form a cigarette bin of unusual appearance. Designed for the Festival Exhibitions by James Cubitt & Partners.

4 The Minister of Works has set up a committee to consider the urgent problem of litter in the royal parks; it is proposed to experiment with this L.C.C. design. For the parks it will be fitted with removable bins with gay colours, chosen to blend with the natural setting, yet symbolising the function of the unit.



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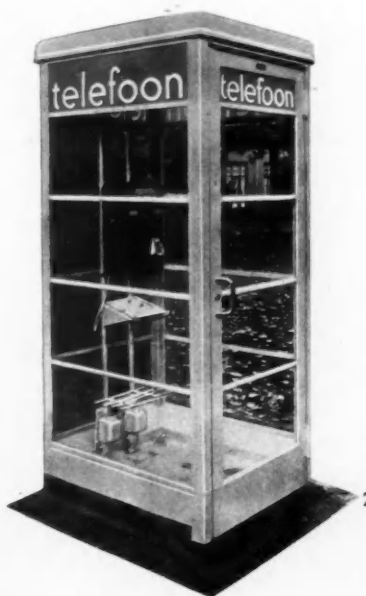
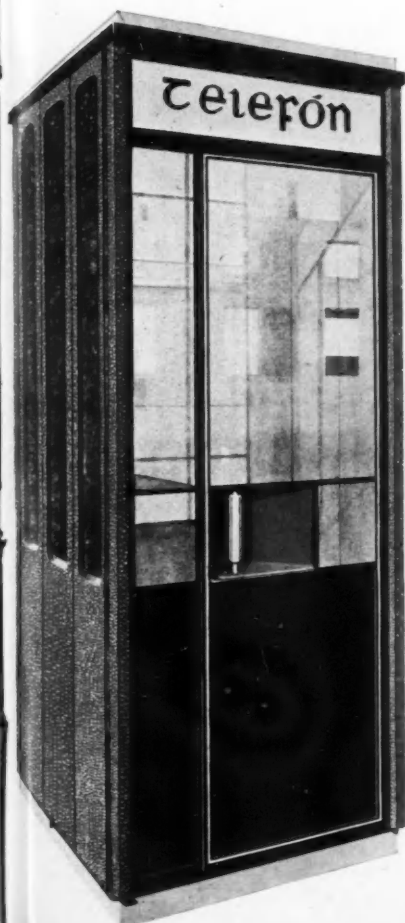
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ABOVE Even in the fastest car there is no mistaking the road when lettering and layout are as good as those of this Swiss sign.



Need our towns lack colour? Movable flower-boxes on hard surfaces have much to recommend them, where grass and conventional layout raise maintenance problems. These concrete tubs were designed for the Festival of Britain, and similar types are beginning to appear in towns throughout the country.



TRAFFIC

TRAFFIC SIGNS must allow no reasonable margin for error, give no ground for the uncertainty which in modern conditions is the cause of so many accidents. The overriding function of the street nameplate is to be easily readable and quickly understood. Much of this equipment in this country must, with the growth of traffic, be urgently reconsidered.



LEFT The age of speed creates the need for more and more advance directions, but their job is defeated unless the message is immediately intelligible. These tell their stories lucidly, without fussing.



In several Victorian examples the name of the street was brought out by a bold Roman letter form on a cast plate, like this example.



In this name-plate the letters are so elongated that from a short distance they seem a collection of vertical lines. The introduction of Gothic and italics adds a further confusion.



A letterpress letter form, adapted for mass-production name-plates. The form and spacing of the letters combine to produce a quality lacking in the other street name-plates. Designed by Frank Gayton.

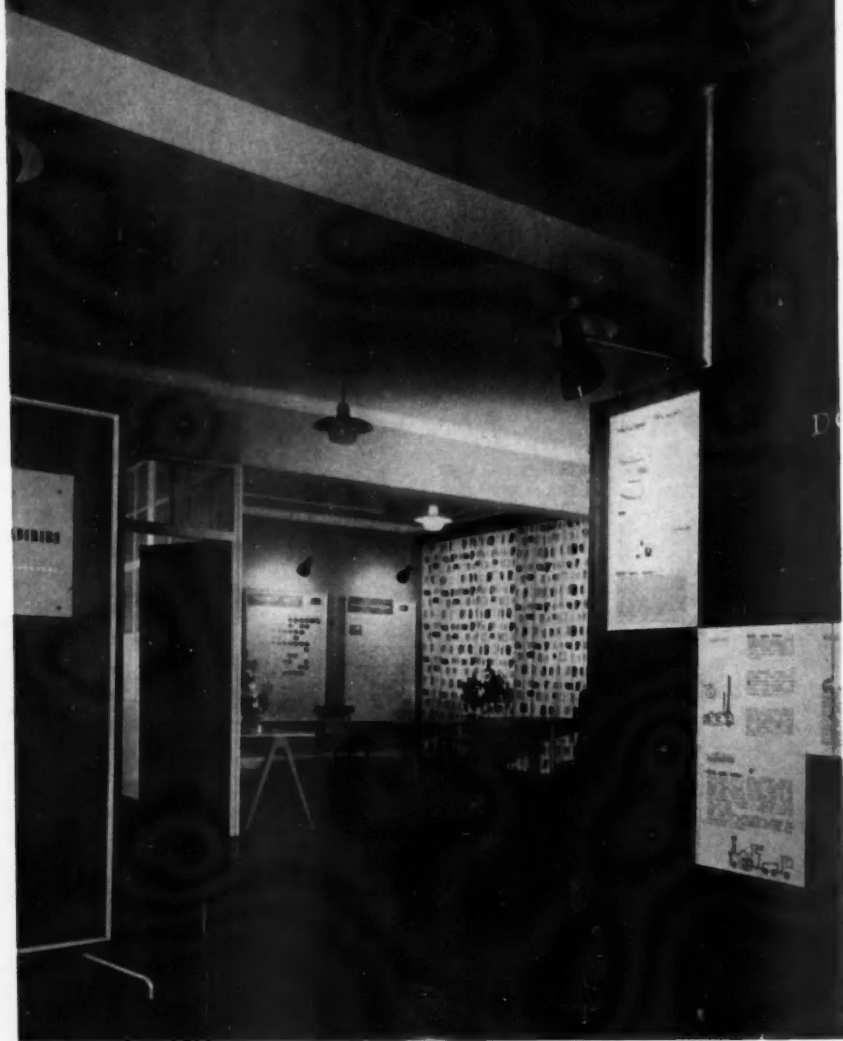


An excellent example of signwriting. Spacing of wording in relation to background is an important factor in legibility.



Functionalism takes a holiday. This playful lion guards a flagpole outside the Architects' and Artists' Meeting House in Oslo.

The showroom in Docker Brothers' newly decorated London headquarters. The screens on the right and a curtain behind the enquiry panel are used to divide the showroom into reception and office areas. Strong colours (for example, red ceiling, Archrome No 5) are used to emphasise these divisions.



A showroom for colour

DOCKER BROTHERS have recently redecorated their London showroom at 17 Berners Street, London W1, to the designs of John Lunn and Mary de Saulles, architects and industrial designers, as a demonstration of the possibilities inherent in the Archrome* (Mun-

sell) range of colours. The showroom makes the required demonstration in two ways - by its own colour scheme which is charming and appropriate, and by charts and other reference material on display. These two in combination have already shown their pulling power by attracting some of the leading architectural and industrial design offices to come

* The range is described in the Ministry of Education Building Bulletin No 9, H M S O, 4s

with their whole staffs to view the decorations and to discuss this interesting new method of choosing and specifying colours.

Many of us in the past have been perplexed by the difficulty of finding colours that we want in the paint manufacturers' ranges and by the difficulty of specifying a chosen colour without providing a large sample. The Archrome range is more practical for it has a scientific basis. It originated, as so many good things have done in recent years, in the new schools' programme and particularly in the work of the Hertfordshire County Council and the Ministry of Education. It is perhaps unnecessary to detail the defects that the Hertfordshire architects found in the ordinary paint-colour ranges. The experience is common to all of us – the scarcity of fully saturated colours, the unnecessary profusion of 'creams' and 'stones' to the exclusion of other very pale colours, the harsh greens that clash so badly with the more subtle greens of nature, the smallness of the range of greys.

So the first and greatest advantage of the Archrome range is a selection of colours that we are likely to want. The second is implied in what has already been said: we get a nomenclature that is scientifically based upon the Munsell system of notation (which appears



ABOVE The manager's office. Wallpaper is specially printed in Archrome colours (Nos 20, 36 and 47) and the curtains are dyed No 6.



ABOVE The Archrome range and Munsell system of colour notation are explained in chart form.

to most people to be the best available system) and is understood by paint manufacturers, several of whom are now prepared to supply colours against a specification in terms of Archrome serial numbers. A third advantage is that the system of notation indicates the degree of light reflection. The eye can be deceptive in this matter: for my own part I tend to think pale blues are paler than they are in comparison with pale reds. When choosing colours for interior decoration it is always useful to know the degree of light reflection from particular colour samples.

The Archrome range has already begun to find favour in spheres other than schools, where it originated. Architects have taken to it gladly for many different types of buildings and it is now finding a place in industrial products. To promote its use in these wider fields is the primary function of the new showroom. That it has already created considerable interest among those who specify paint is a testimony of the showroom's success, which is due as much to the skill of the designers as to the excellence of the range itself.

More luxurious furniture

ONE MORE SIGN that modern furniture is gaining a firm foothold is that a number of manufacturers has now produced some designs in the higher price range. Today there is a wider selection than ever of well-designed modern furniture at reasonable prices, but until recently those seeking more exclusive, and therefore more expensive, pieces have had so small a choice that they have turned from modern designs to antiques or good reproductions.

The wide acceptance of modern furniture derives largely from the war-time utility scheme. It suggests relatively simple, tax-free furniture, and many manufacturers and retailers say that, owing to its lack of exclusiveness, it does not attract the wealthier customer.

Interesting and original designs in furniture need not be confined to those employing new materials and techniques. New materials such as wood laminates, metals and Latex Foam inevitably express themselves and influence design, but the majority of manufacturers in this country use traditional methods of construction. How then can they continue to produce good, fresh designs? Quality of workmanship is obviously of the first importance. Rare woods, the use of inlay, brass fittings, decoration in the form of suitable carving by hand or machine, marquetry and shaped fronts (yet to be tackled successfully) are some of the traditional methods that might be, and in some cases are, used to produce high-class modern furniture. Two of the

latest examples are illustrated here and it will be seen that one firm had the original idea of screen-printing on wood as a decorative treatment.

Ten years is a short period in the history of furniture in which to review a design trend, but the last decade has been all-important to the industry. Many more people now realise that the best modern designs are far removed from the characterless and hybrid furniture, which unfortunately can still be seen in our stores. This change did not come about without the efforts of enlightened manufacturers and designers who produced good furniture, and the retailers who had faith enough to stock it. But with this encouraging development there is a real danger that, through the unintelligent use of



Sideboard for the new 'Albemarle' group in which Hille has consciously aimed at the high-priced market in this country and a highly sophisticated export market — particularly in the U.S.A. Although largely hand-made, the designer has kept the overall form simple and elegant, but has used rich materials which give a feeling of quality. It is interesting to note that the materials used — rosewood, marble and brass — have composed some of the finest English furniture of the past. Designed by Robin Day and made by S. Hille & Company Ltd. Retail price (inc P Tax), with table and eight chairs, approximately £360.



A sideboard in black and ivory. Veneers of English holly (a clear ivory wood that does not yellow with age) and ebonised beech. It is mounted on satin brass legs. This piece is of particular interest owing to the introduction of screen-printing in black on the holly veneer.

Designed by R. C. Heritage (decoration by Dorothy Heritage) and made by G. W. Evans Ltd. Retail price (inc P Tax) £61 7s 9d.

certain clichés by those manufacturers who follow a trend without understanding it, modern furniture will become debased and the public will turn away from it. We have perhaps forgotten the real meaning

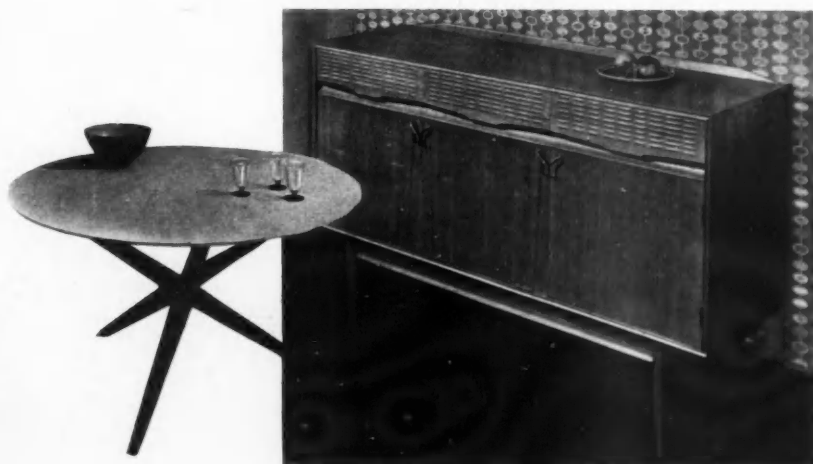
of the words 'refinement' and 'grace'. They are the qualities we admire in eighteenth-century furniture and there is no reason why they should be absent from the furniture made today. So it is heartening to find a

few firms courageous enough to design and make furniture for a market hitherto largely monopolised by antiques or reproductions.

A. GARDNER-MEDWIN

A circular dining-table to seat six to eight persons. Top is of English holly veneer, with ebonised beech legs which are tapered and chamfered. Designed by R. C. Heritage and made by G. W. Evans Ltd. Retail price (inc P Tax) £27 4s 6d.

A well-proportioned and detailed sideboard in elm veneer and beech. The drawers of beech have a design produced by router and spindle. See DESIGN November 1952, 'Contemporary Decoration for Furniture', which included similar examples from the Royal College of Art. Designed by R. C. Heritage for G. W. Evans Ltd. Retail price (inc P Tax) £43 14s 6d.



OFFICE EQUIPMENT

Part four

ACCOUNTING MACHINES

R. Dudley Ryder



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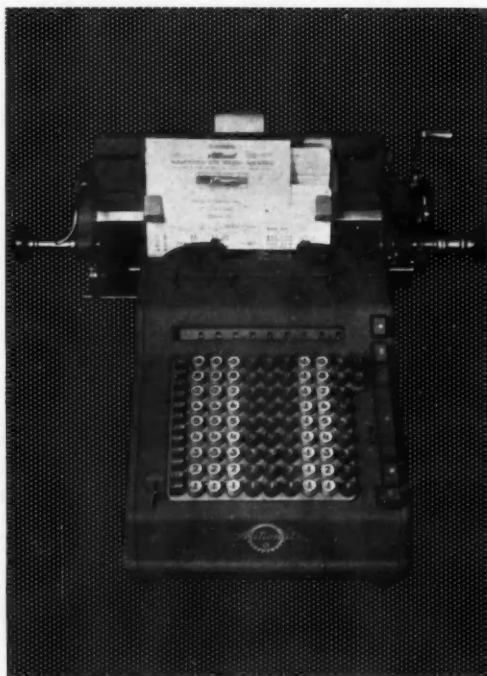
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Today there exists a wide range of accounting machines of many different types. They consist in the main of ledger-posting machines and similar equipment, punched-card accounting machines, desk calculators, and large-scale calculators of the electronic variety which operate in conjunction with the punched-card system. Nearly all are of American design, but some have been designed in Germany, Sweden, Denmark and Switzerland. The examples illustrated in the following article - the fourth in this series - show that while some machines are excellent in appearance, others would be improved by better detailing and colour.



LEFT The 'Summa 15' hand-operated adding-listing machine is typical of the unusually high design standard associated with the name OLIVETTI. It is fitted with a simplified keyboard and is provided with a cut-out switch which enables it to work only in whole numbers. British Olivetti Ltd.

RIGHT Another 'small office' book-keeping machine, straightforward and unobtrusive in design. It is a development of the adding machine embodying features such as wide carriage, automatic shuttle, key dating, and simultaneous addition or subtraction in both registers if required. The National Cash Register Co Ltd.



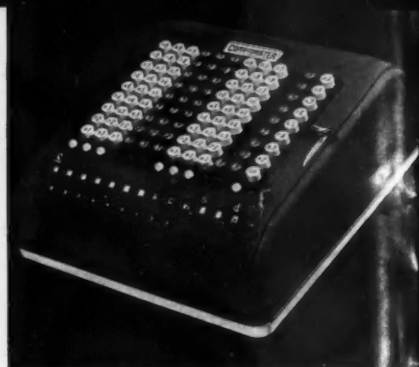
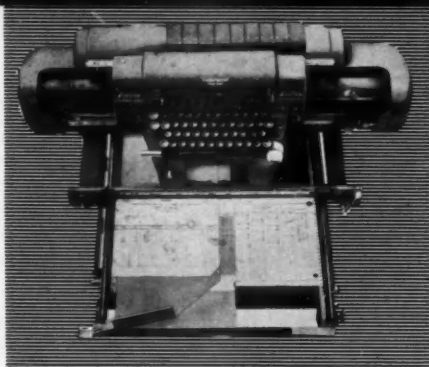
This good-looking electric accounting machine is fully automatic. All moving parts are enclosed in a well-integrated casing, and the simply designed keyboard eliminates unnecessary feature keys. The registers are of the 'clip-on' type for fast removal and repositioning. Remington Rand Ltd.

ACCOUNTING MACHINES of the ledger-posting type, either with or without typewriters, are most complicated pieces of mechanism containing, in one case, nearly 18,000 parts. It is impossible to describe in detail the many uses to which these machines may be put, but it is safe to say that they may be set to do almost any kind of accounting work. Manufacturers are beginning to realise the importance of good appearance in markets which are becoming increasingly competitive and in many instances close attention has been given to every detail of design and construction. One firm makes the cases of resin-bonded glass fibre to reduce noise from the moving parts inside. Research has been undertaken into the question of the most suitable colours to use, not only for the cases of the machines but also for the numerous plastic key caps, and as a result eyestrain and fatigue have been reduced.

The punched-card system has proved itself to be of great value not only for accounting purposes but also in connection with the correlation of facts and figures and for

This machine, with its compact shape and clean lines, is the new BURROUGHS 'Multiple-Total Adding-Subtractor'. It is a 13-column keyboard machine which accommodates tape or narrow forms. Burroughs Adding Machines Ltd.

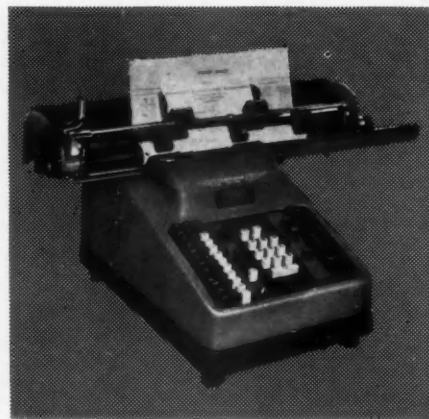
1 The UNDERWOOD 'Elliott Fisher' all-electric accounting machine incorporating a typewriter shows the trend of enclosing vulnerable parts wherever possible. The flat bed, an exclusive feature of the machine, enables forms of varying size, thickness and texture to be inserted and automatically clamped in perfect registration. Underwood Business Machines Ltd.



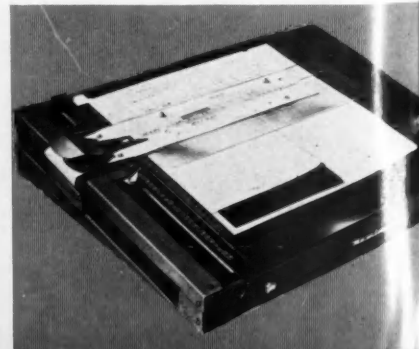
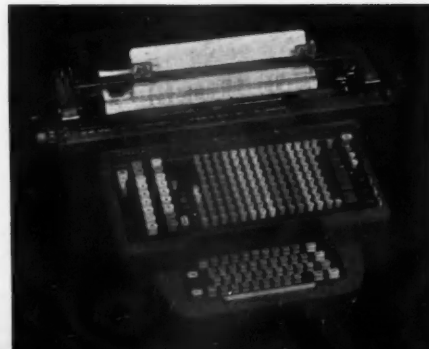
costing and stores analyses. It is particularly useful when employed in conjunction with tape machines for integrating statistical and accounting data received from branch factories, sales offices and subsidiary companies.

The basic idea of punched-card accounting is simple. Facts and figures are recorded by punching holes in any of 960 different positions in a standard card. This operation is verified and the cards are then fed into electrically operated machines which sort and record them into predetermined sequences at speeds up to 36,000 card columns an hour. These sorted cards are then placed in a tabulator and the machine automatically senses the holes and extracts, at high speeds, the information they represent.

At the last 'Business Efficiency Exhibition' most of the punched-card accounting machines were finished in black and for this reason did not compare favourably in appearance with other office machines which are now finished in lighter colours. But where machines are rented in large quantities (they are normally available on a rental basis) serious difficulties might arise



7 This machine, embodying an electric typewriter, is one of the latest, most comprehensive and flexible of all keyboard-operated machines. Careful thought has been given to the design of every detail. The keys are arranged in columns of different colours and are given a non-glare finish to eliminate eye-strain, while the case itself is made of resin-bonded glass fibre finished in grey. The National Cash Register Co Ltd.



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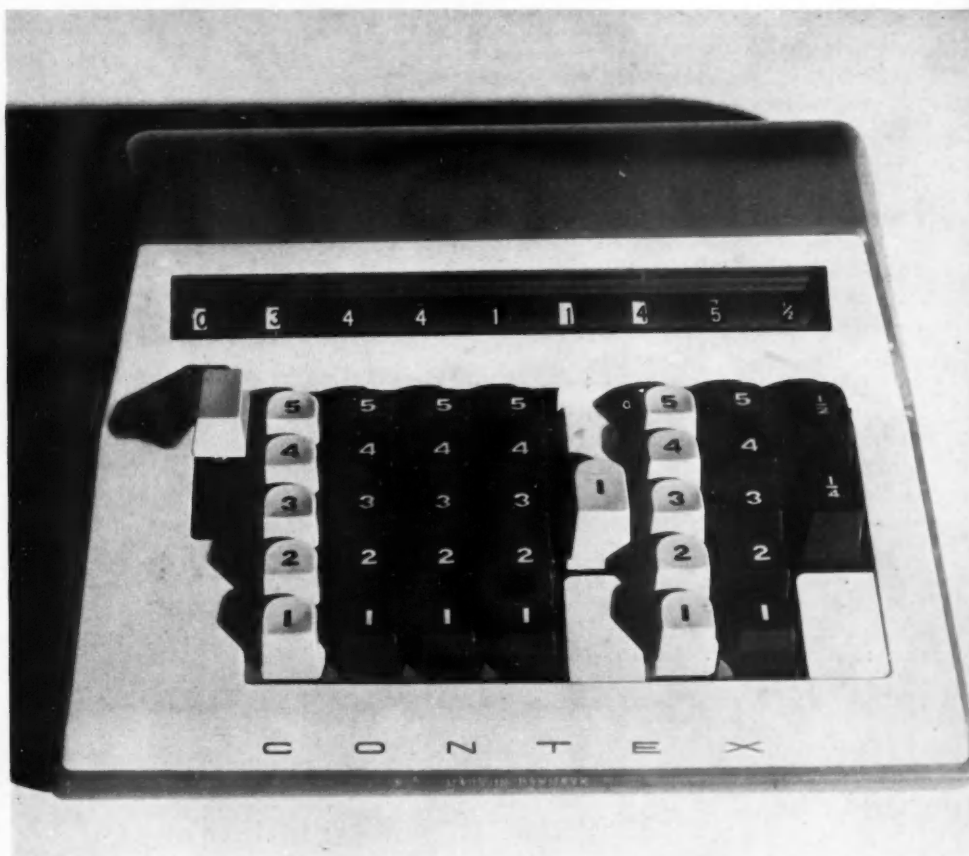
2 The latest electric COMPTOMETER is compact in arrangement and has a simple casing. It is a key-driven adding and calculating machine which does all figure work with remarkable speed and ease. Felt & Tarrant Ltd.

3 Another excellent accounting machine is the BURROUGHS 'Sensimatic'. There are five versions based on the new principle of sensimatic control, which directs the machine automatically through every mathematical function and carriage movement during a posting operation. The polished steel lines across the front are not included in the latest models. Burroughs Adding Machines Ltd.

4 The SUMLOCK 'Figureflow' desk calculator is a portable machine, light in weight and well finished though the line of the projecting side panel is rather weak. The machine will handle additions, subtractions, multiplications and divisions, to cover every type and classification of office calculation. Bell Punch Co Ltd.

5 UNDERWOOD 'Sunstrand', a small portable, all-electric accounting machine of good appearance and low cost. An interchangeable control plate allows each machine to be employed in a variety of applications. Underwood Business Machines Ltd.

6 This well-designed compact calculating machine measures only 9x8x4 inches and is electrically operated. It is known as the 'Executives' Model' and is ideal for travelling. Made in Germany and distributed in this country by Brunsvig Sales Co Ltd.



ABOVE The CONTEX adding machine - an excellent example of clear layout, sensitive modelling and soft colour spoiled only by the fashionably angular, widely spaced lettering of the trade mark. Only seven inches across, it has a plastic case and was redesigned by Count Sigvard Bernadotte. Made in Denmark and distributed in this country by Office Machinery Ltd.

8 The 'Remi-Matic', an entirely new piece of office equipment specially designed to bridge the gap between the old pen-and-ink book-keeping methods and the expensive modern accounting machines. Remington Rand Ltd.

An endless variety of accounting and statistical information can be computed, extracted and printed by the HOLLERITH 'Senior Rolling Total Tabulator'. The finish on most punched-card accounting machines is black and does not compare favourably in appearance with some other office machines finished in lighter colours. The British Tabulating Machine Co Ltd.

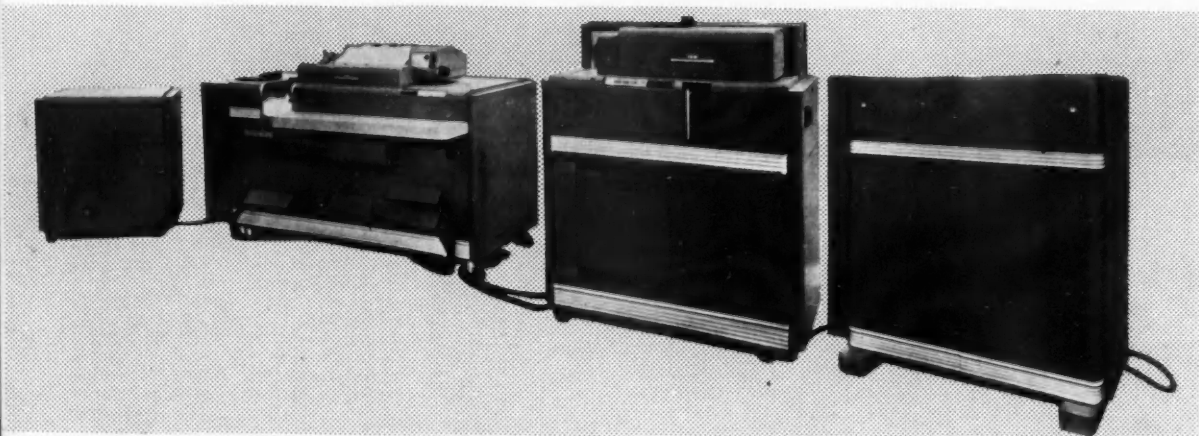
if a manufacturer suddenly produced his machines in an attractive range of new colours. He would probably be overwhelmed with requests for the replacement of existing installations by those of the latest type. It would appear that manufacturers are very much alive to this problem and are already taking steps to deal with it.

It is improbable, however, that high-speed tabulating machinery will ever take over all the work that is at present carried out at the office desk. Many desk calculators of different types are available, some of which achieve high design standards in the modelling, colour and detailing of the cases.

The IBM card-programmed electronic calculator has been designed for scientific, engineering and actuarial use, and consists of the accounting machine, the electronic calculator, the gang summary punch and the auxiliary storage unit interconnected by cables. The clean lines and simple shapes are businesslike and visually satisfying. IBM United Kingdom Ltd.



One of the interesting new developments in the field of punched-card accounting machines is the POWERS-SAMAS 'Electronic Multiplying Punch'. This machine mechanically senses two factors punched in a card, multiplies them electronically, automatically checks the computation and punches the answer into the card. It is finished in black 'crackle' enamel though in future machines will generally be finished in grey which will improve their appearance. Powers-Samas Accounting Machines (Sales) Ltd.



USA

Design for labour-saving:

Part two

CLAUD BUNYARD

The first article in this two-part survey of American domestic labour-saving devices (DESIGN July pages 35-38) set out the conditions which have determined the development of the appliance industry in the USA and described recent trends in the design of equipment for storing food, for washing, drying and ironing clothes and for cleaning the house. This second article discusses equipment for preparing and cooking food and describes a recent experiment in kitchen planning.

THE MOST IMPORTANT INNOVATION in the field of food preparation is the electric mixer. Mixers save a great deal of time and sheer hard work in beating and stirring cakes, puddings and so on. They have variable speeds, and are usually equipped with at least two sizes of bowl. Some have attachments for mincing and juice-squeezing, and have become so popular that special packaged cake-mixes are now on the market for use with them.

To the designer, mixers offer unlimited scope for sound original treatment and they are a favourite choice of industrial designer students for diploma projects. Perhaps because of their compactness and inherent sculptural interest they do not suffer, as do 'cased' appliances, from the temptation to add unnecessary detail. The majority are honest expressions of their function, with serious attention given to the legibility and easy manipulation of dials.

Of the non-powered, smaller cooking accessories there is endless variety - cooking knives, choppers, spoons, forks, and some handsome sets for wall-hanging, with magnetic attachments. The best are as good as they should be, but probably no better in design and quality than the best from Great Britain.

Cooking

American de-luxe cookers, as automata, have reached a very advanced stage of development. Such progress, however, is subsidiary to good cooking, and it is not necessary to reach into the luxury price group to acquire an extremely efficient cooker. However, since the latest developments are to be found in the de-luxe models, the illustrations are confined, with one exception, to these.

From the practical viewpoint alone, the ideal cooker presents a formidable specification. Firstly, the saucepan heating units must provide a wide variety of temperatures ranging from fast boiling to slow simmering. The trend is to replace one of

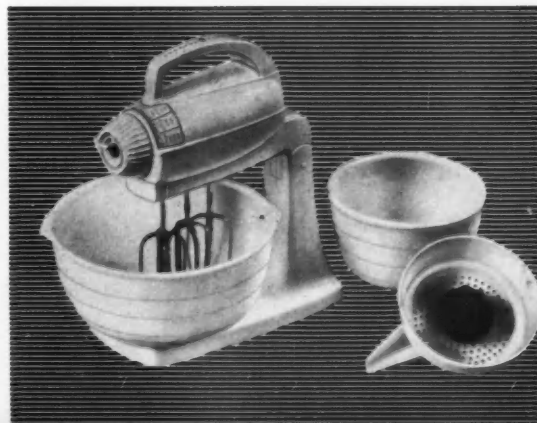
four saucepan units with a deep fryer. On one electric cooker at least, the third saucepan unit is heated by an infra-red lamp for very fast boiling.

The larger models provide a working surface alongside the heating units. Frequently this hides a griddle - a popular means of 'shallow' frying - made accessible by a hinged lid, which also protects it from dust. The controls of the heating units on gas cookers are invariably located in front and in relation to the individual burners, but on electric cookers they are usually built into the splash-back, along with oven controls and timing clock. There are probably reasons of convenience and economy in wiring to account for such arrangements, though it seems likely that these limiting factors have been capitalised by providing an impressive concentration of controls where they are most noticeable - especially to the prospective purchaser. Whether this is the most convenient arrangement for the cook is doubtful. On many models she must stretch her hand and forearm over steaming saucepans to reach the controls. In others, they are located at the rear of the work



LEFT SUNBEAM electric food-mixer - one of the most popular of these appliances. The dial is clear and easy to read.

RIGHT GENERAL ELECTRIC 'Triple-whip' mixer with 12-speed control. Selector knob is grooved for wet-finger grip. Beaters slide out easily and the elimination of centre shafts simplifies cleaning. It has built-in lamp under head, and juice squeezer and mincer attachments. Case has strong well-defined shape, easy to keep clean.



space. So long as this is not occupied by a sizzling griddle it is safer, but until the 'feel' for the appropriate control switch has become automatic to the cook, the arrangement has obvious disadvantages.

Design for convenience

A great deal of development work on ovens has been carried out recently. An even temperature has been achieved by the use of top and bottom heating units, the top unit also serving as a broiler. Cantilevered sliding shelves are provided in some, and 'window doors' are fitted on most of the de-luxe models. One manufacturer has recently succeeded in providing a periscope for oven observation, with a visor on the splash-back. The problem of oven cleaning, if not eliminated, has been minimised in at least one model by making everything – including the units and shelf supports – completely removable, leaving a clear unbroken surface inside with rounded corners.

Some original thinking on the planning of cookers has resulted in the THERMADOR units in which the oven is separated from the hotplate and is raised to waist level, a cooking top being provided elsewhere. The unorthodox design of this group of cooking units is tied in with the fact that they are made to be built-in. The sales literature suggests a variety

of kitchen layouts which demonstrates the possibilities for convenient planning offered by this system of cooker design.

Apart from cookers there are numerous small specialised cooking appliances. The most common is the electric toaster which saves not only labour but bread. Most are thermostatically controlled and the toast 'pops up' when ready, while some have 'colour to taste' control knobs. In most it is necessary to press down a spring lever to cock the 'popper' and to lower the bread into place, but one model at least dispenses with this small inconvenience and all that is necessary is to drop the bread in. The best of the toaster designs are excellent. There are also coffee-makers, waffle-irons, drink-mixers, griddles, chafing-dishes, broilers, roasters, pot-roaster-servers, babies' bottle sterilisers and warmers, and even corn-poppers, but, strange to tell, scarcely any electric kettles.

Barbecue influence

The development of some appliances seems to have been stimulated by a revival of the barbecue custom, and the discovery by many holiday-makers that a charcoal steak has a juicy tang that cannot be matched by any cooked in the most superior de-luxe and be-gadged electric cooker. The atmosphere of the campfire on

a starlit evening, faces lit by the fire, the appetising smell of the cooking – all these were the perfect escape from the frenzy and artificiality of modern mechanised life. When nights became cool the brazier was taken indoors and put in the fireplace. This led to the revival of chafing-dishes, and other spirit- or candle-heated vessels, for informal table and sitting-room cooking. Thus developed a craze for flame cooking indoors, to which LIFE magazine devoted a double-spread in colour. Then the appliance manufacturers counter-attacked. The 'Broil-quick Super Chef' brings this story up-to-date.

This particular appliance is also remarkable in that it is one of the very few on the market which is associated with the name of its designer. In this respect the policy of the appliance industry is in direct contrast to that of the home-furnishing industries. At first sight there may be obvious reasons for this. The design of a kitchen stove for instance must inevitably be a team job. But the lack of a single controlling mind of the highest calibre is so apparent in the design of almost every major appliance that it seems that the larger firms might well consider calling in a really first-rate consultant. One car manufacturer has done so with highly successful results. Having produced a series of 'lemons' it called in one of the best designers in the U.S.A. The result was a car of

BELOW

KELVINATOR electric cooker – the smallest of a group of four. A clean functional design is spoilt only by the ornamental back panel. The controls are well placed and clearly indicate the units to which they refer.



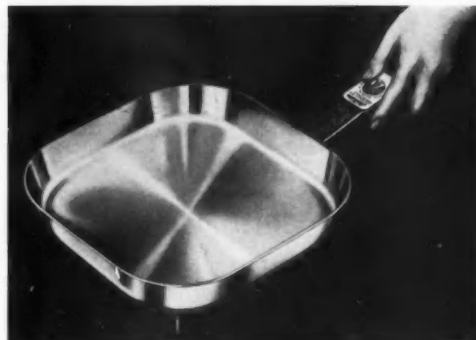
ABOVE THERMADOR built-in oven at waist level and separate 'island' cooking top – the result of new thought on kitchen planning. Surface finish is stainless steel. Controls are conveniently placed and have simple clear detailing.

ABOVE
PEERLESS
frying and
and four-l
or a 20-l
same time
equally a
designed b



LEFT

FRIGIDAIRE electric cooker incorporates a deep fat-fryer and window in oven door. All oven shelves and supports removable for cleaning. Dials on splash-back set away from top heating units to avoid scalding of arms. There is unnecessarily elaborate chromium decoration but dials (illuminated) are simple to operate.



RIGHT

SUNBEAM electric frying-pan with constant temperature control and guide on handle.



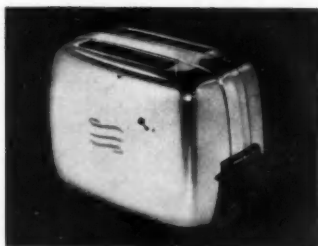
ABOVE

PEERLESS 'Broil-quick Super Chef' for roasting, frying and broiling. Has infra-red heating unit and four-hour timer. Will roast a 12-lb turkey or a 20-lb joint and will fry or broil at the same time. This handsome appliance with its equally attractive pack (not shown) were designed by Raymond Loewy.



LEFT

SUNBEAM waffle-iron - a good example of a very popular appliance.



LEFT

GENERAL ELECTRIC toaster can be set to produce light, medium or dark toast. Automatic 'popper' is set by pressing lever in the centre of handle. An elegant example of its kind.



LEFT

SEARS ROEBUCK electric cooker incorporates infra-red fast-boiling unit. Each top unit has eight push buttons (total 32) besides dials for ovens, broilers and griddle. Design of control unit is flashy and is meant to be a 'marvel'. Ovens have top and bottom heating units and utensil drawer has toe control.

RIGHT

SUNBEAM fully automatic toaster. Colour of toast can be controlled and toast 'pops up' when cooked. Compare 'modernistic' decoration with the more restrained GENERAL ELECTRIC example above.



excellent design which has more than justified the maker's courage and imagination. Surely what can be done with motor cars can also be done with the relatively simple problems of domestic appliances.

Kitchen planning

The overall design of kitchens has until recently followed the same trends as in Great Britain, but the increasing size and number of major appliances require ever more floor space. The aim is to minimise footwork by locating everything so far as possible within arm's reach. Working surfaces are made continuous with storage above and below. Some factory-made cabinets are equipped with special-purpose storage features such as sliding trays for standard size cans, while one make has built-in lighting. Counter-tops on the better makes are of hard plastic, one design having a raised front edge. Both wood and steel are used for basic construction. Dining areas in many new houses are separated from the

kitchen by counters, which serve also for meal preparation and sometimes as snack bars. Kitchen planning in the long term is fundamentally an architectural problem, and it seems to be worth serious study to determine whether the common rectangular plan is necessarily the best or whether curved or non-parallel walls do not offer advantages.

Kitchen of tomorrow

At a recent exhibition the Frigidaire Division of General Motors has made a serious attempt to give the public a glimpse of the progress that may be expected in kitchen and appliance design over, say, the next 10 years. As might be expected there were enough press-button wonders to satisfy the most enthusiastic 'gadgeteer'. But it was much more than a sensational display of automatism. Evidently the project had been executed by a design team of great ability, and although for display reasons one wall had to be left vacant and the exhibit could not therefore be arranged as an

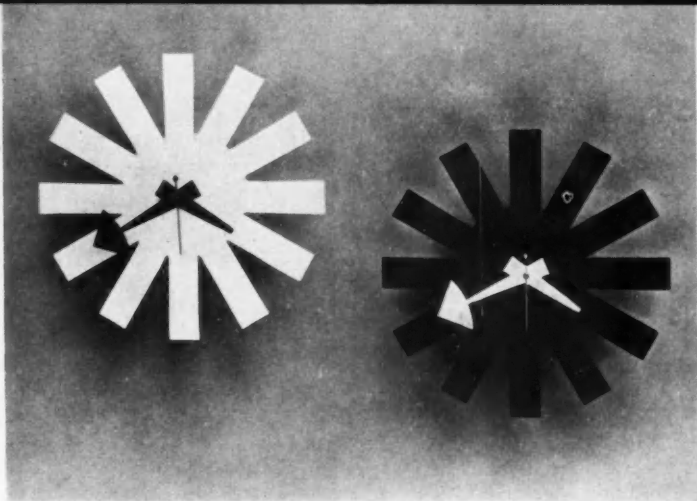
actual kitchen, it expressed a thorough and imaginative sense of kitchen design in planning and detail.

So far as possible all appliances were arranged at waist level. The refrigerator and freezer were designed horizontally and raised off the floor, and the doors were made to slide open vertically by push-button controls. In the cooking range an oven was placed each side of the surface units, push-buttons again raising each to counter height for opening. The oven doors were of mirrored glass for heat insulation and became transparent when the lights were put on. One had a 'charcolator' that would pass either charcoal or hickory smoke through the oven to flavour the meat (shades of the barbecue). The sink and dishwasher were contained in an 'island' to make them equally accessible to the stove and the adjoining dining area. Air conditioning – a much-needed commodity in all kitchens especially in summer – was generously provided by a cool-air inlet below the range (where it is most needed) and outlets in the ceiling.

This project may be compared to that of a high-speed research aircraft, neither industrially nor commercially practicable at the present time but providing valuable data for development.

'Kitchen of Tomorrow' – an exhibition by the Frigidaire Division of General Motors to show possible developments in kitchen design and planning. Points of interest are waist-high horizontal refrigerator, counter-top ovens which are raised to waist height by push buttons, mirrored-glass oven doors, island sink unit and a host of push-button gadgets.





LEFT Clocks with faces made of lacquered wood strips. Designer: George Nelson for the Howard Miller Clock Co.

American Letter

Jean Stewart, Retail Officer CoID, is at present touring the U S A and has sent us some of her early impressions of the American design scene. Here are some points from her letter:

"I was immediately surprised that there is so little to be seen in the shops and elsewhere which can be described as typically American in design. Most goods are Scandinavian, Italian or Japanese in character, which appears to reflect the life of a nation composed of people from many countries and with little tradition of its own. This is borne out by the 'Good Design' exhibitions at the Merchandise Mart, Chicago, where a large proportion of the goods on show is foreign in origin. It seems that the purpose of these exhibitions is to raise the design standard of goods on sale in the shops rather than to promote the best products of American manufacture.

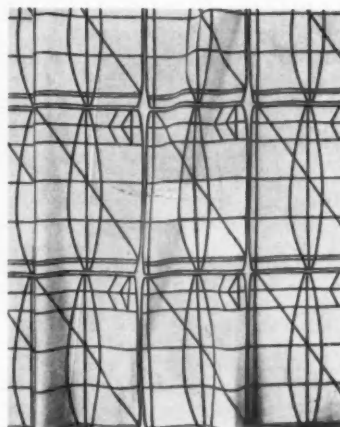
"The majority of exhibits at this year's 'Good Design' show (see illustrations) seemed too stark and pure for British taste. There was not, for example, a single floral among the fabrics, the designs being mainly geometric (rather than abstract) and in this sense reminiscent of 'advanced' work of the 'thirties. None of the pottery was decorated and there were no light fittings, flatware, storage cabinets or wall coverings because, apparently, there was none submitted

which was up to the required standard.

"This year is the fifth anniversary of the 'Good Design' exhibitions and to mark the occasion a special display was arranged showing the best 100 items selected from previous shows. It is interesting to note that a sales survey, carried out at the request of the Museum of Modern Art and the Merchandise Mart, showed that 13 of these 100 designs have been 'best-sellers'. Another special feature this year is a series of displays prepared by seven American art schools to show possible future trends in design.

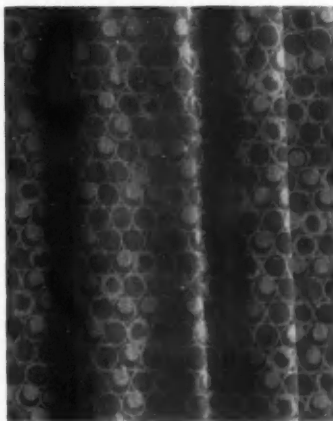
"In complete contrast to the almost black and white treatment of the 'Good Design' exhibition is a show by the American Institute of Decorators. Here colour was much in evidence. Particularly interesting was the juxtaposition of colours that are close together on the wheel such as yellow and orange, or orange and pink, giving rich and extravagant effects. Such combinations appear exciting in an exhibition or as stage décor ('The Golden Apple' now running in New York has a similar theme) but would probably be too disturbing in the home.

"On the question of British exports to the USA, a buyer in a large New York retail store complained that many British manufacturers take too long over deliveries and do not produce the right designs at the right price. He would prefer to buy



Two furnishing textiles for Knoll Textiles Inc: ABOVE Hand-printed design by Inge Toft of Denmark.

BELOW Hand-printed design on cotton by Carol Summers.



from Great Britain, he said, goods which he is now obtaining from Germany, Belgium, Italy and Sweden. Pottery firms were particularly criticised, for whereas American potters are normally able to deliver within 30 days, British firms, he said, take from six months to a year. He thought British manufacturers should try more to find out what is wanted on the American market rather than rely on designs which sell well at home. He instanced the new Rosenthal pottery (illustrated DESIGN April page 30) as an example of the type of modern design which is selling well in his store."

Swedish glass at the Tea Centre



AN EXHIBITION OF GLASS from A B Kosta Glasbruk, the oldest of the 50 or more firms which together make up the Swedish glass industry, is to be held at the Tea Centre, London, from September 6-25. On show will be many fine examples of decorative and table glass, some designed by Elis Bergh as long as 20 or 30 years ago yet still in production and still, apparently, as up-to-date in appearance as much that has been produced since. More recent pieces by the firm's present art director, Vicke Lindstrand, will be shown together with examples by another designer, Gordon Adsetts, an Englishman trained at the Royal College of Art.

The exhibits will be displayed on special demountable shelves similar to those used in the firm's new and very modern showroom in Sweden - also designed by Lindstrand. Currently with the exhibition will be displays of Kosta glass at Harrod's of Knightsbridge and Anson's of Piccadilly. These as well as the Tea Centre show have been arranged by Kosta's in conjunction with J. Wuidart & Co Ltd, the firm's London agent. Some typical Kosta productions, illustrated here, show how the sluggish nature of the metal has been expressed in shapes of great beauty. Decoration is engraved or included within the crystal.



ABOVE Engraved vase, designed by Vicke Lindstrand.

LEFT The coloured decoration is enclosed within the crystal. Designed by Vicke Lindstrand.



ABOVE Spirit bottles with pierced shapes derived from modern sculpture, designed by Vicke Lindstrand.

BELOW Engraved vase, designed by Gordon Adsetts.



Design: Number 69

NEWS

Production for plenty

There is something charming about small exhibitions where one can get around within a reasonable mileage. As the 'Production Exhibition' was largely an experiment—the first of its kind—the National Hall, Olympia, was the only field to cover.

I was half expecting to see a great deal of fast, automatic machinery, in an atmosphere of the 'Faster, faster, faster' type (remember the Capek insects?). Instead I was delighted to find that the idea of production for plenty had been successfully put across. There is a subtle difference between plenty and mere economies by hustle.

Somehow the show managed to convey the importance of modern techniques and technology as a positive force that is worth getting excited about. Of course the 'erudite' element was preponderant among both exhibitors and visitors. The ministries, institutions and associations, as well as educational bodies, almost dominated the scene. But some of the largest modern manufacturers, who have no messy little workshop secrets to hide, showed their latest methods of production in considerable detail.

The largest stand was that of Ford, with full-scale plant demonstration of techniques, and the smallest was Scott-Ashford's as the lone representatives of the notion of industrial design.

Presentation and stand design were, on the whole, very clear and occasionally very good, with the usual sprinkling of over-styling and accent on those spreadeagle legs and struts that are supposed to be 'ever so contemporary'. I am told that the exhibition has attracted many of the right type of executives and engineering designers, as well as financiers: the *FINANCIAL TIMES* in its issue of Wednesday, July 7, devoted three full pages to it. The show was coupled with a conference and the speeches given can be studied in the report which will be published by the Institute of Production Engineers. Incidentally, none of the lecturers at the conference were in any way connected with the design profession in our sense of the term.

As few end products were on sale, large captions were numerous. 'Productivity depends on This or That' type of slogan were everywhere in evidence. All the time I was expecting to read somewhere that 'Production begins with Design'. But I looked in vain. Yet is it not obvious that all the techniques of flow-production are positively worse than useless unless the goods are the best of their kind?

The concepts of research, management, education, standardisation, etc. were amply represented both by governmental and private enterprise. It is all the stranger that no one thought fit to feature that process which is the key to all production: the evolution of the product itself.

GEORGE FEJER

Motor Shows

The Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders has announced details of the two 1954 motor shows at Earls Court, London. The 'Commercial Motor Transport Exhibition' will open on September 24–October 2 (except Sunday, September 26) from 10

Electricity showroom

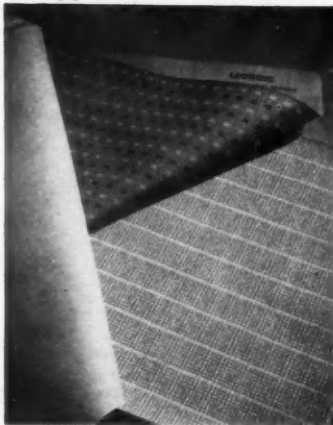
The ground-floor showroom of the London Electricity Board's Centre in Regent Street. The original showroom on the same site was designed by Maxwell Fry in 1937 but was destroyed by fire last year. In the new design, by Misha Black, John Diamond and Alexander Gibson, all of Design Research Unit, extensive use has been made of clear, bright colours set off by large areas of soft greys, with woodwork in natural beech and dark Honduras mahogany. The wallpaper at the foot of the stairs is a special design by Austin Frazer printed by Arthur Sanderson & Sons Ltd. The general contractor was Frank W. Clifford Ltd.



am–9 pm. The cost of admission will be 2s 6d before and 1s after 5 pm. The 'Motor Exhibition' will be open from October 20–30 (except Sunday, October 24) from 10 am–9 pm. The cost of admission will be 5s before and 2s 6d after 5 pm with the exception of the opening day and Tuesday, October 26, when admission charges will be £1 before and 10s after 5 pm. As usual this exhibition will include sections on motor-boats and marine engines, caravans and light trailers.

Colourful leathercloth

Examples from a new range of leathercloth. The patterns are simple and modern and are printed in a variety of bright, clear colours. Made by J. Williamson & Son Ltd.



Craft pottery

The recent exhibition by Margaret Hine, William Newland and Nicholas Vergette at the Crafts Centre is typical of much of the best work of studio potters today, though it was unfortunate that the generally high standard of craftsmanship was marred by the inclusion of two or three imperfect pieces. There was much in the exhibition that was admirable – great stoneware bowls and pots, the cats and pigeons and bulls (although the cows looked like drought-stricken victims), the tiled pictures and tiled tables with formalised decoration, and many of the moulded dishes with complex abstractions. Where the picture was naturalistic and arbitrarily compressed or elongated to fit the shape the plates were less successful. As a matter of history, it is interesting to note that the 'contemporary peg-leg', already an obsolescent cliché in furniture, is the current fashion in craft pottery, whether as legs, arms, or other appendages to pigs, birds, plant-holders, humans, bulls or asymmetric bowls.

S.R.F.

Australian 'Round the Table'

Outstanding interest in modern British tableware was shown in a recent exhibition at one of the largest retail department stores in Sydney, Australia. The display was a version of the CoId 'Round the Table' exhibition, shown at the Tea Centre last November.

London representatives of the store, Farmer & Co Ltd, were anxious to send the exhibition to Australia soon after its London showing but found that it was already scheduled to tour Great Britain. They therefore re-ordered many of the exhibits in quantity, shipped out 22 crates, and with the aid of photographs of the Tea Centre show, set up a similar display in Farmer's new houseware floor.

Many people came to view the exhibition and on the first day practically every piece of china was sold. The most popular items of the exhibition and the first to be sold were the spotted china tea and coffee sets by Susie Cooper. The London buyer for Farmer's has reported that although there is a demand for traditional designs in pottery, new shapes and less conventional patterns are becoming increasingly popular. Some hand-made pottery by William Newland and Nicholas Vergette aroused much interest and comment, although high prices have restricted sales. Popular items were the stag-horn and walnut-handled knife-and-fork sets and plain crystal jugs and tumblers.

Publicity for the exhibition ranged from notices, stories and pictures in daily and Sunday papers through Australia to a newsreel film by Fox Movietone, now being screened in all states.

Patrons for artists

Two appeals for a more extensive patronage of contemporary artists and designers by companies and public bodies have been made recently by Sir David Eccles, Minister of Works. At a dinner of the Worshipful Company of Haberdashers, Sir David suggested that when the livery companies rebuild their blitzed halls and add new blocks of offices, they could lead the way by setting a standard of the best in modern design. Architects, he thought, should be encouraged to provide for sculpture and mural decorations in their new buildings – a move which he felt sure they would welcome.

Sir David took the lead in patronage himself at the Convocation of the Royal College of Art (see also *DESIGN* August page 10) when he invited artists to submit designs for six-fold screens to be used in British embassies. These designs could be in any style but preferably should represent some aspect of the Crown such as Royal palaces, Royal Arms, emblems of the Armed Services or historic occasions in British history. A fee of £75 will be paid for the execution of each successful design from the new MoW Fund for Works of Art. Artists wishing to submit designs should apply as soon as possible for further details to the Minister's Private Secretary, Lambeth Bridge House, London SE1.

Award to Gordon Russell

HM the King of Sweden has awarded the Order of Vasa to Gordon Russell, Director, CoID. The order was founded by Gustav III in 1772 for services to the national industries and manufactures.

CoID pottery course

A third CoID pottery course for retailers is to be held at the Wedgwood Memorial College, Barlaston, Stoke-on-Trent, from September 20–24. The programme will include visits to factories and there will be an exhibition at the College of tableware in current production. The inclusive charge for the course is £8 8s. Applications should be made as soon as possible to the Retail Section, CoID, Tilbury House, Petty France, London SW1.

Departments combined

The English Electric Co Ltd has announced that the activities of the Domestic Appliance Division and the Television Sales Department are to be combined. The new division is to be called 'The Domestic Appliance and Television Division' which will be under the management of H. C. Timewell.



School furniture

Close on the publication of the article 'Sitting in comfort' (*DESIGN* July pages 17–21) came an exhibition of furniture at County Hall, designed by the Furniture and Display Section of the LCC Architects' Department. Some examples of unusual dimensions are illustrated here.

ABOVE Designed primarily for use in comprehensive schools, research has shown that this 15-inch chair provides better seating for more children. The LCC has now approved a larger experiment, combining the 15-inch chair with the 25½-inch table. Difficulties of 'leg room' experienced in the conventional locker-type desk have here been overcome by providing a book-locker at the front of the desk.

BELOW This tip-up seat is based on the same anthropometric data as the 15-inch chair, and is intended for use in the fixed area of assembly halls. The back has therefore a greater slope than that intended for classroom use.



Inspection telescope

This telescope has been designed for inspecting the internal unilluminated surfaces of various vessels and containers to see if they are corroded or damaged. The headpiece can enter a hole of two inches diameter and carries its own illuminating lamps. Unlike a conventional telescope it incorporates a reflecting system which enables the operator to view over a wide angle. The telescope is about three feet long and can be focused on objects at ranges of four inches up to infinity. It is finished in chromium and black stove enamel, and was designed by H. W. Hobbs for H. W. Hobbs & G. Hobbs.



LETTERS

Readers' comments on L. Bruce Archer's article 'Artist versus engineer' (DESIGN July pages 13-16)

Designers' title

SIR: In addition to the unfortunate title of Mr Archer's article I regret to see such an otherwise sensible fellow allow himself to be so bedevilled by this question of labels.

The legend of 'infallibility through qualification' is one of the seed-beds of bureaucracy: surely the thing to worry about most is the useful quality of a man's work, not whether he matches up with any one particular set of standards or syllabus.

Qualification, however impressive (and could Mr Archer really announce himself as "Industrial Designer Brackets Engineering" and keep a straight face?) is not of itself a solution. The most heavily affixed 'medicos' are sometimes capable of the most appalling blunders; architects can design the most appalling buildings - and the engineer himself is by no means infallible!

Experience shows that designer-engineer relations can be as cordial as any other - providing that we produce the right kind of work. Where we do not, and are not pulling our weight, we deserve to be resented.

May I draw attention to the rather convenient American title of 'product designer'? It is informative enough to be understood; it neither restricts nor excludes; it is flexible enough to accommodate a ceramic wash-basin or a wooden stillage along with products of pure engineering; it does not concern itself with a man's background, but what he is doing now.

It is entirely up to the individual whether he is a product designer (employed) or (unemployed).

F. C. ASHFORD
Scott-Ashford Associates Ltd
100 Gloucester Place
London W1

Man on the spot

SIR: Mr Archer's article deals with a problem which is only one of many and a rather insignificant one. Industrial design implies design for large quantity production. A large production unit must be backed by a big organisation roughly split into three groups, research (including design and development), production and sales. A large sales organisation imposes pressure on the design department mainly on the time factor. Sometimes, for example, a certain job must be finished or altered quickly, or even have to be redesigned in a matter of hours to meet a production schedule. A decision has to be made quickly. Rightly or wrongly there is no time to contact an outside designer, let alone consult one. Where such a position exists a specialist designer should be on the job 24 hours a day, present at each stage of the evolution of a design.

The consultant, the pure designer, the innovator, dreamer, the man 100 years ahead of his time, is always helpful. As an injection of originality or transfusion of new blood he is sometimes necessary, but to compete with the ramifications of a big production unit the man on the spot is essential.

We are in the business to help to sell a product more easily and with greater speed. Whatever the idealist says, any other



Corby Diagnostic Centre

The illustration shows part of the new Diagnostic Centre at Corby which has been provided out of the Nuffield Provincial Hospital Trust. This modern building has been designed to supplement the normal facilities of the general practitioner's surgery and consists of a consulting and treatment wing, a physiotherapy department and a combined chest clinic and X-ray department, which will be available for use by the general practitioners on a rental basis. The architects R. Llewelyn Davies, John Weeks and Walter Goddard have economised as much as possible on the building, but the use of coloured wall surfaces gives an effect which is bright and cheerful. The work of the Nuffield Provincial Hospital Trust was described by R. Llewelyn Davies, who is Director of the Nuffield Foundation Division for Architectural Studies, in a paper to the recent CoID Scottish Design Congress (DESIGN July page 40).



Youngest designer?

The curtain fabric in this nursery on board the Royal Netherlands ship 'Oranjestad' was designed by Anthony Reich (aged 5) and screen-printed on a fabric made by Tibor Ltd. In the nursery the mast of the ship has been camouflaged to resemble a merry-go-round. Architect for the interior: J. A. van Tienhaven.

considerations must be of a secondary nature. Turning out a good design that will sell, not in spite of the engineer, the production manager, or the sales director, but because of them, will prove the need for better design.

ALAN BEDNALL
Designer
Pye Ltd
Cambridge

'Gust of the age'

SIR: While in accord with Mr Archer's statement that higher management, in general, welcomes the industrial designer of some technical competence – and has an intelligent interest in his aims – I feel that his promise of antipathy at other levels in industry tends to minimise what has already been achieved.

In twelve years of designing for industry rarely have I encountered resentment or non-co-operation, and I can only suggest that when friction occurs it is either due to the designer being introduced in the wrong manner (which is management's fault), or the designer adopting a superior attitude towards those with whom he must co-operate.

Nevertheless, in his own field of visual design, the designer should be given as much authority as possible, and it then becomes his responsibility to produce lines which will sell successfully.

At every stage the artist must create. The engineer tends to look up a book. What the engineer who aspires to artistic abilities must avoid is the idea that visual clichés or rules may be used in designing in the same way as technical formulae. A design should be entirely re-thought with reference to ever-changing social, and other, conditions. Its character, feeling, or expression is something due to the "gust of the age" – the trend to which an artist is particularly sensitive.

JOHN D. STEWART
32 Hampden Avenue
Beckenham, Kent

Unfair recognition

SIR: Hostility will always exist between the engineer and the appearance designer when the product created anonymously by the former earns personal recognition for the latter. The appearance designer may seek to justify his position by the argument that without his efforts sales would undoubtedly be lower, but what defence would this be against the assertion that without the engineer's ingenuity and inventiveness the product would never exist at all?

It is therefore imperative that to achieve the greatest possible design efficiency, the designer must be both engineer and artist, for it is only with a deep understanding of both aspects of the work will he be able to reach the sound compromise which must be the basis of all good commercial design.

Very little attention has been paid to the work of the ordinary engineering designer-draughtsman, in whom resides a vast background of technical competence, who has carried the burden of practically all industrial design in the past, and an extremely high proportion of it at the present time. If we are to improve the breed of our products as rapidly as possible, it is the engineering designer-draughtsman who should be the first to receive the benefits of artistic training.

FREDERICK R. SIBBALD
38 Stevenage Road
Fulham SW6



New unit furniture

Examples from a new range of unit furniture produced by Ian Henderson Ltd. The cabinets have a guarea carcass, the door-fronts being of Canadian birch and the drawer-fronts of rosewood. The inlaid decoration and neat spun-brass knobs contribute to the refined and elegant appearance. Designed by Ian Henderson.



Redesigned welding machine stand

The redesign of the stand for this butt-welding machine is an example of the many minor modifications which could be made by the engineering industry to improve the quality of its products. The manufacturers, Holden & Hunt Ltd, had three reasons for making the change – to reduce the cost of production, to increase the convenience for the operator and to improve the appearance as an incentive to greater sales. The operational design of the machine itself was quite satisfactory and has remained unchanged. The earlier design, left, had a framework of angle iron brush painted with industrial black and grey paints. Lifting handles were necessary as a single pair only of cast iron wheels was included. In the new design, right, light tubing is used on a simple four-wheel chassis, the complete unit having a grey crackled finish. Some models have wheels with synthetic rubber tyres; others have cast iron for heavy wear. Note the improved nameplate.

OTHER LETTERS

Poland not backward

SIR: Though delighted to read Paul Hogarth's article about industrial design in Poland (DESIGN June pages 33-5), I feel it is misleading to compare Poland's post-war industrial development with that which took place in early nineteenth-century Britain. In spite of post-war co-operation between Poland and the Soviet Union, with all its attendant influences, Polish architects are not "completely out of step with modern western architectural thought", as the author states.

By not describing Poland's progress in architecture between the wars, Mr Hogarth presented Polish architects and designers as backward. Though I welcome the article, I cannot regard it as giving a true picture of Polish architectural thought.

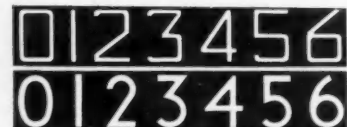
M. CHYLINSKI
37 St Mildred's Road
Lee
London SE12

The phrase quoted by Mr Chylinski formed part of the introduction to the article and was not written by Mr Hogarth - EDITOR.

Ergonomics

SIR: It is an encouraging thing when people with differing viewpoints come to similar conclusions, for there is a chance that some of these may be right. It was, therefore, delightful and encouraging to read J. Christopher Jones' article on 'Ergonomics' (DESIGN June pages 13-17) for he can point out with scientific authority, and therefore with conciseness, such fashionable shams as the use of four identical knobs to perform four totally different functions with different hand movements (his illustration No 10).

Let us not forget, however, in this day or the authority of science, that the original meaning of 'aesthetics' was 'the science of the conditions of sensuous perception'. The author knows that industrial designers are much concerned with pleasurable perceptions and is not surprised that we are pained by the numerals found to be satisfactory by ergonomic testing. If these numerals are in fact more easily recognised at speed than his colleague's normal sans-serif, which are compared with them (see illustration), and if they are even more legible than the classic ciphers such as those of Caslon or Aldus, then it is time to call a council of advertising, printing and industrial design authorities, on an international scale, to agree with the ergonomists upon new standards of cipher design.



None the less we still have our ideals in a few traditional letters and figures of undoubted beauty (and therefore of ready acceptance). Are these wrong? Are they to be scrapped because of ergonomic tests, or is it possible that the conditions of testing may have led to logical conclusions from wrong premises?

J. BERESFORD-EVANS
Neatham Grange
Alton
Hants

Where space is limited the EDITOR reserves the right to shorten letters.

BOOKS

Mies van der Rohe, Philip C. Johnson, second edition 1954, Museum of Modern Art, New York, \$7.50

It is characteristic of the architectural age that is on the way out that the architects with the greatest reputations have built the fewest buildings. It is almost as if the fairy godmother gave the newly initiated graduate the choice between a world-wide reputation amongst the discriminating and the churning out of millions of cubic feet of unregarded stodge. It was not always so: great architects of the past executed great works. The leaders of the present age, with a very few exceptions, base a reputation upon teaching, writing, lecturing, many unexecuted (and unasked-for) projects and a very few choice works.

Had his career closed with the first edition in 1947 of Philip Johnson's book, Mies would have made no exception to this rather dismal rule. From his first job in 1907 till he emigrated to the U S A in 1938 there were some two dozen jobs in 30 years - less than one a year - with as many projects as jobs. In the same period 85 publications are listed in the bibliography. In this period he was a first vice-president of the Werkbund and for three years principal of the Bauhaus. Indeed, his biggest success was in industrial design rather than architecture, for it was he who invented the tubular cantilevered chair (in 1927), deriving a large part of his income from the patent until he left Germany.

Since 1947 his story has been fortunately different and we gladly welcome the new edition of Philip Johnson's scholarly and authoritative book. Projects that were, alas, only projects in the first edition are now realised and illustrated by photographs - the Farnsworth House, Promontory Apartments, Lake Shore Drive, more buildings on the IIT campus, to name the chief examples - more cubic feet built than in the whole 30 years in Germany. We confidently hope that Mr Johnson will bring out a new edition again very soon.

MARK HARTLAND THOMAS

Decoration and Furniture. Vol I 'The English Tradition' and Vol II 'The Principles of Modern Design', Bruce Allsop, Pitman, Vol I 70s, Vol II 75s

Bruce Allsop, an architect and a lecturer in architecture, has at his command an impressive body of knowledge and a wide range of visual and technical experience with which to illuminate it. The first of the two volumes under review, 'The English Tradition', does full justice to both. The second is so different in quality and kind that it is difficult to imagine it the work of the same person.

Volume I is a significant work of its kind; its structure is excellent, it is notably well illustrated and captioned and the lively critical intelligence behind this careful structure of fact and comment is felt by the reader to be all the time urging him to devote his own effort to the understanding of the design of the past as part of the stuff of the society which created it. Each section of the book is devoted to a 'period' (the conventional segments of history are taken) and each is divided into four parts - an essay which the author says is "an assessment of the period rather than of the works of art produced in it"; a 'summary' (so-called) in which the author, in smaller type and text-book style, lays in the historical background with its significant happenings and notable figures, and introduces shrewdly chosen

facts to pinpoint influences; and a magnificent set of full-page illustrations with captions which are in some ways the most notable elements in the book. Throughout both volumes the author makes it plain that he cannot separate architectural decoration from building work, and this means the whole building, not the interior alone, so that those readers hoping for a book on traditional interior design should look elsewhere. Readers, however, who wish to try to see the past through the eyes of one who has attempted to see it as a whole and in right balance will find this volume of great value. The style is a readable one, enlivened by some sparkling phrases of description, and the author steers neatly between the needs of architectural students and of the lay reader. The unusual scope of the book should be mentioned; it follows decoration from the Middle Ages up to 1939, no mean achievement in itself. Students of the subject will be intrigued to learn that the author manages to do this without once mentioning the Bauhaus. And he has the fashionable dislike of the eighteenth century.

In the preface to the second volume occurs a phrase which presages the shortcomings of this portion. The author states "The only challenge to the vernacular seems to be a new 'modern style'. This I can only regard as a morbid thing, a new eclectic kind of design like all the Victorian styles. . . . It is important to distinguish this modern stylism from transitory and harmless fashions. The danger is that those for whom the prospect of unending endeavour in design is appalling will re-establish the Renaissance aesthetic and a formal style of design on the basis of what has been done in the last thirty years or so, and at the same time label themselves as 'progressive'. . . . It would be better even to revert to Palladian architecture than to found a new style upon the immature experimental work of this century." Whatever the exact implications of this may be, and however much one may deplore the over-swift setting to the style of the Modern Movement in design, Mr Allsop's words do not betoken a friendly attitude towards the international post-war aesthetic, a spontaneous development expressive of its time if ever there was one.

This refusal to come to terms with the only coherent style of his own time seriously handicaps Mr Allsop in this volume. For one thing, he has trouble with his illustrations. Out of the great body of significant material which he could have obtained from, for example, the libraries of the Architectural Association or of the CoID, he has only 68 plates, 17 of which alone are concerned with contemporary architecture, interior design or furniture. Of these six illustrate the furniture of a single well-known firm (by photographs often seen elsewhere) and five are Italian examples. One wonders what the reason can be for this apparent boycott of the author's well-known co-professionals. This book on the principles of modern design carries, on the other hand, 24 plates illustrating period work, and a further dozen or so which demonstrate techniques and constructions which would better form the subject of a building manual. Of the drawings which illustrate this work, the less said the better. There is a rich choice of young illustrators able to convey by elegant and sympathetic drawing the virtues and charm of what they portray. Why, therefore, should the author select two not very witty or skilful exponents of the funny-grotesque school, who between them put down hardly one line likely to be pleasing even to an admirer of Lancaster, Searle and the rest?

In the text, too, this volume is not *soigné* as the other is. Though it is entitled 'The Principles of Modern Design' the principles are largely missing and it does not read as the outcome of a profound and serious study

of the fundamentals of modern design, but rather as a hastily run-together series of informal lectures. It seems as though Mr Allsop's architectural knowledge and habits of thought get in his way; he cannot stand aside and see present-day new work in his mind's eye as part of an enthralling design story unfolding and engaging all the perceptions of the beholder. He does not relate the movement to the principles of design because his sympathies have failed him. His love is of something that *might* be if . . . and to this end he determines that the students of his book shall lack nothing that he can give them which might divert them from the perilous paths disclosed by his words quoted above.

But he is right in what he says in one of the best chapters of this second volume, that on new materials. This and parts of the chapter entitled 'Modern Decoration' have strong messages and come near to tapping the springs of all fine design. That of the first is broadly "Treat all new materials, and all drawing-board design with suspicion; design springs from materials rightly used"; that of the second "Use real things". Here we have the man whom we came to like so much from the first volume, the wise teacher who has looked and thought and who refuses to be spoofed. C. G. TOMRLEY

Italic Handwriting - Some Examples of Everyday Cursive Hands, selected by Wilfred Blunt and Will Carter, Newman Neame, 10s 6d

Joseph Compton in his introduction to this

fascinating collection of some 40 examples of cursive handwriting stresses that a good hand can be acquired at any age. When every child is taught italic at school it will indeed be a blessing for British penmanship.

These excerpts from hasty notes or set-pieces (written by famous people or school-children) successfully destroy the illusion that all italic handwriting looks alike, lacks character, or takes hours to do. The aspiring calligrapher in need of practice models cannot do better than buy this book. The examples are reproduced by offset lithography. M.-J. LANCASTER

Modern Lettering and Calligraphy, edited by Rathbone Holme and Kathleen M. Frost, with four sections: 'Calligraphy', Mervyn C. Oliver, 'Modern Lettering in Book Production', Ruari McLean, 'Lettering in Association with Architecture', George Mansell, 'Lettering in Advertising', Frederick A. Horn, Studio, 25s

Whilst we are all, surely, near to saturation point on the topic of calligraphy, there is most certainly a need for guidance and example in the broader field of modern lettering. THE STUDIO has followed up its 1937 LETTERING OF TODAY with this post-war sequel, drawing upon the work of the last ten years in England, the U S A and the Continent. One is always concerned to know to whom exactly such a book as this is addressed. The publisher, on the jacket (nice work by Frederick Horn), aims at "the practitioner, the student or the buyer of fine lettering"; and true enough, each

and all of these will delight in the many splendid examples. But perhaps the most important reader could be the teacher.

There is, in fact, a dearth of inspired lettering in the field of English commercial design, though you would not know it from this book, and only from the schools can this sad fact be altered. It may be a false conclusion, but it would seem that whereas the Englishman revels in the purist field of calligraphy and the graven letter form (think, for example, of our great tradition of Edward Johnston, Gill and Reynolds Stone) he becomes tongue-tied and stilted in the more exuberant and tougher game of commercial and industrial design. It may well be just one more obvious case of the national temperament, and perhaps each cobbler should stick to his last. One must however admire the uninhibited zest of the Americans, the quill flourish of the Germans in packaging design, and the 'guts' and gaiety of many of the other Continentals.

There is a great deal to admire and to be learned from this well-planned, well-produced book. If it falls into the right hands it will stimulate us all to be more critical - and perhaps more adventurous. A. W. BELL

A Dictionary of English Domestic Architecture, A. L. Osborne, Country Life, 21s

Traditional Quilting, Mavis Fitterandolph, Batsford, 21s

Built-in Furniture, Arthur R. Brown, Crosby Lockwood & Son, 12s 6d

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Gordon Adsetts, ARCA (48). Bruce Allsop, ARIBA, BA Arch (53). F. C. Ashford, MSIA (51). John Barnes, MSIA (29). Alan Bednall (52). A. W. Bell (54). Count Sigvard Bernadotte (41). Misha Black, OBE, FSIA, M Inst RA (DRU) (49). Kenneth Boyd, ARIBA (22). Collett and Beadle (54). Neville Conder, ARIBA, AA Dipl Hons, MSIA (30). Susie Cooper, RDI (50). R. Llewelyn Davies, ARIBA, BA (51). Robin Day, ARCA, FSIA (36). Design Research Unit (26). John Diamond, B Arch, ARIBA (DRU) (49). George Fejer, MSIA (49). Austin Frazer, MSIA (DRU) (49). Frank Gayton, AIPA (33). Alexander Gibson, ARIBA, AA Dipl (DRU) (49). Eric Gill (54). Walter Goddard (51). Mark Hartland Thomas, OBE, MA, FRIBA, MSIA (53). Peter Hatch, MSIA (art editor). Adrian Heath, ARIBA, MSIA (29). Ian Henderson, MSIA (52). F. H. K. Henrion, MBE, FSIA (cover). R. C. Heritage, Des RCA, MSIA (37). Margaret Hine (49). H. W. Hobbs, MSIA (50). Paul Hogarth, MSIA (53). Frederick A. Horn (54). Jack Howe, FRIBA, FSIA (21, 30, 31). Edward Johnston (54). J. Christopher Jones, BA (53). William Kellner (14). Vicke Lindstrand (48). Raymond Loewy, SID (45). John Lunn, MSIA (34). Ruari McLean, MSIA (54). David Mellor, Des RCA (24, 25). George Nelson (47). William Newland (49, 50). Mervyn C. Oliver, ARCA (54). A. M. Rankin (23, 26). Mies van der Rohe (53). Mary de Saulles, ARIBA, AA Dipl, MSIA (34). Sir Giles Gilbert Scott, OM, FRIBA, RA (30). Scott Ashford Associates Ltd (14, 49). Frederick R. Sibbald (52). Basil Spence, OBE, FRIBA, FSIA (25). John D. Stewart, MSIA (52). Reynolds Stone (54). Carol Summers (47). J. A. van Tienhoven (51). Inge Toft (47). Nicholas Vergette (49, 50). John Weeks, ARIBA (51).

Page 24: drawing by A. Carter, MSIA. Designers' addresses may be obtained from the EDITOR.

Acknowledgement

Page 31: the photograph of the telephone kiosk, 3, is reproduced by courtesy of the Postmaster General.

A travelling showroom for stationery

These illustrations show the interior of a new mobile showroom designed by Collett and Beadle for Spicers Ltd. As long ago as 1950 Spicers introduced a travelling showroom for the display of their stationery products in the form of a specially built BERKELEY trailer caravan with interiors designed by Sir William Crawford and Partners Ltd (DESIGN May 1950 page 27). That caravan has been in constant service during the past three years and has travelled up to 60,000 miles in many parts of the British Isles. Since then, however, the range of stationery products has increased to such an extent that a new and much larger showroom became necessary. The new display van was built by C S M Motor Bodies on a BEDFORD-CARRIMORE semi-trailer and provides about 50 per cent more display space than the earlier caravan. The reception area, left, is raised above the normal floor level as it is situated at the forward end over the turntable. Colour generally is pale grey with a brownish-grey fabric for the seats. The carpet is a greenish-yellow. At the rear end are the showcases, storage lockers and drawers. Woods used are mahogany and English ash.



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